

# MOVING ON: Transitioning to College

## disABILITY Services Newsletter for High Schools

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*The mediocre teacher tells.  
The good teacher explains.  
The superior teacher demonstrates.  
The great teacher inspires.*

—William Arthur Ward

### So, Your Students Are College Eligible, but Are They College Ready?

Being college eligible and being college ready are not the same. Students coming into College of the North Atlantic (CNA) are meeting minimum entrance requirements, but many are finding the transition from high school to college very challenging.

In light of these challenges at CNA, as well as other post-secondary institutions around North America, significant research has focused on what it means to be college ready. The most current findings show that for students to be truly college ready, they need the following:

1. Core Academic Skills. These skills are not specific to particular subjects such as history or math. Instead, these are broader skills that enable one to learn across a range of subjects and include research skills, communication skills, problem solving, and analytical skills.
2. Content Knowledge. For students to be truly college ready, they need to demonstrate that they can apply the knowledge they have learned in their academic courses. They must have good literacy and numeracy skills.
3. Soft Skills. These are the social behaviours that enable one to thrive in college and in the workplace such as effective study habits, managing time well, a good work ethic, ability to get along with others, etc. Even though these behaviours are not taught, they still need to have been learned in order to find success at one's studies and on the job.

The skills necessary to succeed in post-secondary education (PSE) are also the skills needed to succeed in life—they are life skills. College readiness implies that the student's preparation is well-aligned with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in post-secondary education. The emphasis should be placed on being able to succeed, not just on being admitted. Students also need to take time to map out their careers and to consider how their skills, talents, abilities, and interests match up with their choice of college program and subsequent career. The quote below illustrates some of the noted concerns as students transition to PSE:

*I wonder about students' ability to manage time and tasks when school is structured most often in a way where those are managed for them. I wonder about students' ability to balance fun and work when most of the time constraints that schools put on them are taken away. I wonder about students' ability to collaborate when school has become a test prep factory and everything is about competing NOT cooperating. I wonder about students' ability to 'think on their feet' and make decisions after having spent 13 years in school where they were told what to learn and when to learn it.*

On Being "College Ready". (2013, April 21). "from An Antique Teacher": <https://antiqueteacher.wordpress.com/2013/04/21/on-being-college-ready/>

Schools are the best resource for high school students and their families. You can help students become not just college eligible, but also college ready. Discuss the difference with your students and their parents; encourage them to meet with the guidance counsellor to discuss career choice and encourage them to connect with the college early to ask questions about programs; work with students to become better self-advocates and to identify the areas where they can improve while they are still in high school; and provide more opportunities to attain the "soft skills" and share this information with teachers who may wish to have a discussion about college/PSE readiness with all students. A student with a disability may or may not have more challenges, but all students need to be college ready to be successful!

*Being College Ready.* "from VSAC Road Maps": <http://vsacroadmaps.org/get-ready/being-college-ready/>

Jones, P. (2014, October 21). *Toward College Success: Is Your Teenager Ready, Willing, and Able.* "from Toward College Success website": <http://toward-collegesuccess.com/being-college-ready-is-not-the-same-as-being-college-eligible/>

## Modified Courses and CNA Entrance Requirements

College of the North Atlantic programs have different entrance requirements. Depending on the program, the entrance requirements for recent high school graduates might be:

- high school graduation (some trades programs and Office Administration),
- high school graduation with an overall 60% average (some Applied Arts and Tourism programs)
- high school graduation with a 60% average and 60% in specific English, math and/or science courses (Engineering Technology, Health Sciences, I.T., Business, Natural Resources, and some Applied Arts programs)

In addition, some programs have specific admission requirements such as portfolios or a driver's licence, and other programs are competitive entry. Common to all programs, however, is the high school graduation requirement. So, what does "high school graduation" mean?

CNA's definition of high school graduation is "...the successful completion of required credit courses as specified by the Department of Education". It is very important to note that high school students who complete modified programs and courses require further assessment before eligibility is determined. The completion of a modified program or course may prevent the applicant from being accepted into regular college programs. Such applications are referred to the campus Committee on Special Admissions-Disabilities for assessment.

## Important Academic Regulations

### Grade Point Average (GPA)

Grade points are awarded for each course based upon the credits per course and the final mark that has been obtained in the course. Students must attain a GPA of 2.0 in order to be in good standing with the college. If you have a GPA of between 1.00 and 1.99, you will be placed on conditional status. Students who do not achieve a 2.0 GPA and pass all courses may not be permitted to continue with their program. For additional information, see <http://www.cna.nl.ca/Admissions/Academic-Regulations.aspx>.

Please note: Industrial Trades programs do not have a GPA.

*There is no greater disability in society, than the inability to see a person as more.*

—Robert M. Hensel

If you have questions about the suitability of a particular program for an individual who has completed modified courses in high school, you should contact a CNA Coordinator of Disability Services as early as possible. Applicants who have completed modified courses will be asked to submit disability documentation, IEPs and any other supporting documentation, and further assessment may be required. This can be a lengthy process and should, therefore, be initiated as early as possible, preferably even before the individual makes the decision to apply.

The decision to accept a student who has modified courses on his/her transcript depends on a number of factors such as:

- what course(s) were modified and to what extent (e.g., modifying high school math will make any trades program an extreme challenge; whereas, modifying geography will not have the same impact)
- whether or not the applicants can, otherwise, demonstrate that they have the necessary pre-requisite skills
- the applicant's "student skills" such as self-advocacy, commitment to the program, etc.
- consultations/interviews with the student, the instructors, program coordinators, college administration, high school staff, etc.

See <http://www.cna.nl.ca/Admissions/Admissions-Regulations.aspx>.

### Going into the Trades? 50% Won't Cut It! 70% Is the Pass Mark!

**70% Pass in Industrial Trades/Re-Write Policy**—Unlike high school where 50% is a pass, CNA has a 70% pass rate requirement. This means that in each modular component, you have to have a 70% overall to receive a passing grade. Should you not be successful, you may be eligible for a re-write. In Industrial Trades programs, students may be eligible for a re-write if they have not obtained a 70% pass in a course. Re-writes are capped at two per semester in the fall and winter semesters and one in the intersession, with certain conditions being applicable. For additional information, please refer to <http://www.cna.nl.ca/Student-Support/Disability-Services.aspx> or [http://www.cna.nl.ca/About/pdfs/policiesandprocedures/Academic/Industrial%20Trades%20%20Rewrite%20of%20Examinations/2Procedure/AC-117-PR\\_Industrial%20Trades%20Rewrites%20%20\(R1%202011\).pdf](http://www.cna.nl.ca/About/pdfs/policiesandprocedures/Academic/Industrial%20Trades%20%20Rewrite%20of%20Examinations/2Procedure/AC-117-PR_Industrial%20Trades%20Rewrites%20%20(R1%202011).pdf)

## Applying for Disability Grants through the Canada Student Loans Program

Completed

1. Apply for a program at CNA. 1
2. Indicate on your application that you have a documented disability and you wish to be contacted by a Coordinator of Disability Services (**CDS**). 2
3. A letter will be sent to you by CNA seeking documentation related to your disability if it has not been previously submitted and contact will be made by the CDS to arrange for completion of a consent form. 3
4. Bring the letter to your counsellor or IRT teacher at your school or to your doctor if your disability is medical/physical or mental health related. 4
5. Ask the counsellor at your school to get a Verification of Permanent Disability (**VOPD**) form filled out for you. The counsellor may fill it in or it may get filled in by an educational psychologist or a medical doctor. This form is available on the Student Aid website or from the CDS. 5
6. Mail, email, or fax your assessment information to the CDS. 6
7. A CDS will arrange a pre-entry interview with you in person or over the phone to discuss your support needs. 7
8. Apply for a Canada Student Loan when the applications are available online in early June so that you may access grants available to students with documented disabilities. 8
9. Submit your completed **VOPD** to Student Aid along with a copy of your assessment report if the disability is a learning disability/disorder or cognitive disorder. This is what is needed to access the basic \$2000/year grant. If the assessment is older than five years, then the counsellor/educational psychologist needs to do some assessment to update your achievement scores and must provide a corroborating letter regarding your learning disability/disorder or cognitive delay/disorder. 9
10. If there are technology and/or tutoring supports recommended by the CDS, ask the CDS to write a **Confirmation of Need** letter for you to send to Student Aid. 10
11. Print a copy of the Canada Study Grant (**CSG**) form from the Student Aid website or get a copy from the CDS. The form is to be sent to Student Aid. 11

From this set of steps, here is a list of the documents/forms/letters you are going to need to apply for grants from Student Aid for students with disabilities and to access supports at the College:

- Verification of Permanent Disability form (completed)
- Assessment report for students with a learning disability/disorder or cognitive delay/disorder. If your disability is mental health related or medical or physical or ADHD, you do not need to submit an assessment report to Student Aid.
- Canada Study Grant form (completed) if supports are recommended by CDS
- Confirmation of Need letter written by CDS if supports are recommended
- Quote for recommended technology (where applicable)
- Quote for tutor if recommended (where applicable)

Note: Even if you have an RESP or you have family paying your way, it is worth your while to apply for the student loan and grants. Most students will still qualify for the grants to pay for their support needs.

### Dates and Deadlines: Apply Now!!

Our programs fill up fast. Please encourage your students to apply now to ensure they have the best chance to get into their program of choice. Some programs have long wait lists and if students wait until the last minute to apply, they may not get in.

High school students can send in their applications once they have started Grade 12. Students with disabilities should take particular care to apply early as some academic accommodations may take time to arrange, there are deadlines to apply for disability-related funding, and students may be offered the opportunity to shadow the programs they are interested in to ensure a good fit.

## DSM-5 and Transition to College

In Newfoundland and Labrador, upon entering Kindergarten, a student is assigned a cumulative record which contains factual, objective, and professional information regarding academic progress, midterm and final marks, adaptations, and attendance. When a student moves from one school to another in the K to 12 system, it is expected that the cumulative record will follow the student.

Upon applying to College, where there is no cumulative record, students with disabilities are required to request accommodations by applying for them through the Coordinator of Disability Services. Students who received support services in high school may be eligible for accommodations at CNA after they submit the requested documentation.

Guidance Counsellors are now deploying guidelines as set out in DSM-5 (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual) that specifically address the need for a comprehensive assessment that includes a:

*clinical diagnosis based on a synthesis of the individual's medical, developmental, educational, and family history; the history of the learning difficulty, including its previous and current manifestation; the impact of the difficulty on academic, occupational, or social functioning; previous or current high school reports; portfolios of work requiring academic skills; curriculum based assessments; and previous or current scores from individualized standardized tests of academic achievement.*

American Psychiatric Association. (2013). Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (5th ed.; DSM-5), p. 70. Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Publishing.

It is imperative that those requiring disability-related accommodations at the post-secondary level make contact with the Coordinator of Disability Services early in their final year of high school. They must be encouraged to be proactive and to follow proper procedures. Students will only receive accommodations if they disclose their disability and provide a comprehensive assessment and/or other relevant information pertaining to the exceptionality.

**Know me by my name, strengths, abilities, hopes and dreams, not my diagnosis.**  
[www.disabilityisnatural.com](http://www.disabilityisnatural.com)

For copies of previous issues or to view further information, please visit our website at [www.cna.nl.ca/Student-Support/Disability-Services.aspx](http://www.cna.nl.ca/Student-Support/Disability-Services.aspx).

### Contact Information—Coordinators of Disability Services (CDS):

#### **Baie Verte, Gander, and Grand Falls-Windsor**

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