



DOWN SYNDROME GUILD  
OF DALLAS

## Post-Secondary Education Opportunities

Receiving a college education and experiencing that very exciting time in life is as beneficial for students with Down syndrome as for students without. The growth that students experience in college can be measured in a number of areas, including academic and personal skill-building, employment, independence, self-advocacy, and self-confidence.

Programs and schools vary widely in terms of what they offer with respect to academics, independent living skills training, residential options and the type of diploma or certificate earned. Deciding which program to enroll in is just like researching any college or program. It is important to find a good fit between the individual and the school. We have included some tips to help in this endeavor:

- ✓ Determine what your intended outcome is- does the student want to be more independent and experience college life away from home in a dorm-like environment, gain employability skills, join extra-curricular activities, etc.? This will be important in deciding which school is best.
- ✓ When contacting a school, note that in most cases, the Office of Disability Services is **not** related to curriculum. It is only to provide accommodations such as tutoring, note takers, etc. Most programming information will be found through the Continuing Education office.
- ✓ Funding is typically paid for by the family, but may be paid for by DARS, depending on each individual circumstance. Contact your DARS representative to find out if this is an option for you.
- ✓ You **must** apply for federal student financial aid (FAFSA) whether or not you think you will get it or need it, in order to receive any funding through DARS for education. See <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/> to fill out an application.
- ✓ If your child is interested in a course, but not able to meet entrance requirements, they may be able to “audit” a class. Check with an advisor for guidance.
- ✓ Many schools that offer opportunities for students with cognitive disabilities do not post these options on their general website. Do not assume because it’s not listed, that it is not offered. Call and ask questions!