



Florida
Consortium
on Inclusive
Higher Education

Florida IPSE Credential Guidance Brief:

1 Background on Inclusive Postsecondary Education

The Florida Inclusive Postsecondary Education (IPSE) Credential Guidance Brief Series is comprised of a set of six stand-alone briefs developed by the **Florida Consortium on Inclusive Higher Education (FCIHE)** and a small workgroup, in consultation with a statewide steering committee. These briefs were written to provide guidance to Florida stakeholders regarding credential development for Inclusive Postsecondary Education (IPSE) programs for students with intellectual disability (ID).

AUDIENCE: These briefs are directed to

- 1) college and university faculty and staff planning to build or expand sustainable and rigorous IPSE programs,
- 2) families and educators exploring and comparing IPSE programs; and
- 3) community agencies and school district personnel to increase program understanding, recognition, credibility and increased options for individuals with ID.



A meaningful program credential is required to become a federally recognized **Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Program (CTP)** and a Florida recognized **Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Program (FPCTP)**. Credentials also increase students' employment outcomes and career opportunities in multiple ways. For example, credentials enable businesses to identify a student's expected skill sets upon program completion and to recognize credentialed applicants as qualified applicants. Credentials earned through IPSE programs or typical degree-seeking programs, and sponsored by the college or university, represent valid and rigorous programs of study. These Credential Guidance Briefs have a number of Florida-specific points of information as they were written for Florida, though families, program staff, and faculty outside of Florida, may find the general IPSE information useful as well.

SERIES: The **Florida IPSE Credential Guidance Brief Series** includes:

- # 1 Background on Inclusive Postsecondary Education
- # 2 Programs of Study
- # 3 Exploring Existing Credentials
- # 4 Partnerships toward Credential Development
- # 5 FCIHE Credential Action Planning Tool (FCAPT) for IPSE Programs
- # 6 Credentialing Resources

ABOUT THIS BRIEF: This **IPSE Credential Guidance Brief: # 1 A Background on Inclusive Postsecondary Education** provides the reader an introduction to IPSE programs, from the national perspective to the Florida context. Additionally, we discuss employment of individuals with intellectual disability as a primary goal of IPSE programs and the influence postsecondary education and an earned credential has on their employment opportunities. The brief also includes a list of acronyms, terms and resources.

The National Perspective on Inclusive Postsecondary Education

Higher Education Opportunity Act

Four years after the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was reauthorized in 2004 with a renewed focus on transition, the Higher Education Act (HEA) was reauthorized (Higher Education Opportunity Act; HEOA, 2008) and included the first federal guidance regarding higher education for students with intellectual disability (Grigal, Hart, Smith, Domin, & Weir, 2017; Lee, 2009). Madaus, Kowwitt, and Lalor (2012) stressed that of the changes to the HEA, “perhaps the most notable changes are those that impact students with [intellectual disability]” (p. 37). The HEOA opened postsecondary education’s doors for students with ID who had previously been unable to meet testing and diploma entrance requirements. Through HEOA’s designation of Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Education Programs (CTP), a new pathway to college was created. Students with ID, who enrolled in institutions of higher education (IHE) programs that met federal CTP requirements and were approved by the U.S. Department of Education, could now access federal financial aid, such as federal work-study funds, Pell Grants, and Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (Madaus, Kowitt, & Lalor, 2012).



To guide this initiative, HEOA designated capital investment for a national coordinating center and model demonstration programs to develop and expand inclusive postsecondary education programs (Lee, 2009). Think College, at the Institute for Community Inclusion, University of Massachusetts Boston, received funds to develop and maintain the National Coordinating Center through 2020. Two five-year model demonstration grant cohorts, called Transition and Comprehensive Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disability (TPSID), have been awarded by the Office of Postsecondary Education since 2010; 27 TPSID programs in 2010 and 25 in 2015. Each of the demonstration sites

report program and student-level data to the National Coordinating Center. The Center evaluates the TPSID projects, collects national data, builds a research knowledge base of inclusive postsecondary education (IPSE) programs, components, and student outcomes. With the second iteration of TPSID projects, several consortia of Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) were funded as technical assistance, program enhancement, and expansion grants. The Florida Consortium on Inclusive Higher Education (FCIHE) is one of those. More information on the TPSID projects, Think College, participating IPSE programs, and current research, can be accessed at <https://FCIHE.com> and <https://thinkcollege.net/tpsid>.

Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Education Programs

The HEOA defines intellectual disability and clearly lists the federal requirements necessary for IHEs to earn Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Education Program (CTP) approval to serve students with ID in inclusive college programs. For the first time, these college students are to access federal financial aid through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Once CTP approval of the federal electronic application is obtained, students with intellectual disabilities enrolled in these programs can apply for certain federal financial aid, for which they would not otherwise qualify: Pell, work study, and Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant (SEOG).

The requirements of a CTP, are found in the HEOA, 2008, Section 760, as referenced below.

- (1) Comprehensive transition and postsecondary program for students with intellectual disabilities.--The term 'comprehensive transition and postsecondary program for students with intellectual disabilities' means a degree, certificate, or non-degree program that is—
 - (A) offered by an institution of higher education;
 - (B) designed to support students with intellectual disabilities who are seeking to continue academic, career and technical, and independent living instruction at an institution of higher education in order to prepare for gainful employment;
 - (C) includes an advising and curriculum structure; and
 - (D) requires students with intellectual disabilities to participate on not less than a half-time basis, as determined by the institution, with such participation focusing on academic components and occurring through one or more of the following activities:
 - (i) Regular enrollment in credit-bearing courses with nondisabled students offered by the institution.
 - (ii) Auditing or participating in courses with nondisabled students offered by the institution for which the student does not receive regular academic credit.
 - (iii) Enrollment in noncredit-bearing, non-degree courses with nondisabled students.
 - (iv) Participation in internships or work-based training in settings with nondisabled individuals.

Inclusive postsecondary education is a relatively new and rapidly evolving field and as a result, there is a significant need for research related to post-school integrated competitive employment, civic and community engagement, and independent living outcomes following IPSE program completion for students with ID. Intervention research is needed to identify effective instructional strategies, such as universal design for learning, and the supports necessary for this population of students to access and progress in the college content. Finally research is needed to identify sustainable funding.

Though low expectations for students with ID remains a significant barrier and despite the relatively few IPSE programs in existence (6% of the total number of IHEs in the US), and the general lack of understanding about inclusive postsecondary options by families and secondary educators alike, the field of inclusive postsecondary education for students with ID is expected to continue to grow. The increased number of CTP approved programs nationally, over the past five years, provides a good indication of the continued growth.

The Florida Context

Since 2010, Florida has been a leader in developing and expanding IPSE programs for citizens with intellectual disability. Florida has been awarded two rounds of TPSID funding since 2010 and has utilized these opportunities to form a consortium of IHEs with the goals of 1) ongoing development and enhancement of IPSE programs through technical assistance and professional development throughout the state, 2) increasing the knowledge-base through research, and 3) developing guidance toward the development of meaningful credential-earning IPSE programs of study.

The current TPSID grant, administered through the Florida Consortium on Inclusive Higher Education (FCIHE), is housed at the University of Central Florida (UCF) and comprised of four IHEs: UCF, University

Florida IPSE Credential Guidance Brief: #1 IPSE Background

of South Florida St. Petersburg (USFSP), Florida International University (FIU), and Florida State College at Jacksonville (FSCJ). Contact information can be found for each of these programs at <http://FCIHE.com>.

Florida's strong growth of IPSE programs has been positively influenced by vigorous parent advocacy, the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council's progressive policies and funding support, and progressive state legislation resulting in a state center, the Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities (FCSUA). The FCSUA



provides student scholarships and program development funds to Florida approved IPSE programs. The Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Program (FPCTP), aligned closely to the CTP, is Florida's approval process for IHEs who wish to implement a Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Program, specifically for students with intellectual disabilities, that meets the requirements of 1004.6495(5)(c)3, *Florida Statute (F.S.)*. More information on the importance of CTP and FPCTP approvals can be found in the FCIHE Brief 1.17, *What is a CTP and FPCTP and Why are they Important?* at [http://FCIHE.com/wp-content/uploads/2017](http://FCIHE.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/FCIHE-Brief-1.17docx-1.pdf)

[/01/FCIHE-Brief-1.17docx-1.pdf](http://FCIHE.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/FCIHE-Brief-1.17docx-1.pdf)

FPCTP applications are available through the Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities (FCSUA) and students enrolled in FPCTP approved programs are eligible to receive state financial aid through student scholarships. The FCSUA is also authorized to award competitive start-up and enhancement grants for IPSE programs that meet FPCTP requirements. To be approved as an FPCTP, 1004.6495(6) *F.S.* mandates that an institution has been approved, applied for, or indicated a date for applying for federal CTP approval from the US Department of Education. More information regarding the FCSUA can be found at <http://FCSUA.org>.

Employment: A Primary Goal of Postsecondary Education

One of the primary goals of inclusive postsecondary education (IPSE) programs is to prepare students for integrated competitive employment through a collegiate program of study. It is through these IPSE programs of study that students with intellectual disability access academic, social, technical, and career-directed courses, activities, and internships toward the accomplishment of a chosen credential and paid employment.

This focus on employment has been timely, given the passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014, which assists job-seekers in obtaining the employment, education, training, and support services necessary to succeed in the labor market (United States Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, n.d.). As a result of WIOA, the number of states adopting the *Employment First* philosophy, identifying competitive integrated employment as the first and preferred outcome for all citizens, regardless of ability, has increased (Association of People Supporting Employment First, APSE, 2017). Finally, the need for skilled employees is increasing as the trend in the labor market for low-skill jobs is dwindling (Siperstein et al., 2013). Postsecondary education is increasing in importance for jobseekers and career education, as an important path toward more middle-skilled occupations, is one of a number of attainable pathways for students with intellectual disability.

Most who attend college do so with the goal of a better job, and many, to enter into and establish themselves in a chosen career. Students with intellectual disabilities have been excluded from traditional college experiences and opportunities, often remaining in high school settings while their peers without disabilities transition to college (Cranston-Gingras et al., 2015) and employment. People with intellectual disabilities have been accessing higher education for several decades now (Butler et al., 2016) though not on a large scale, certainly on a national scale. According to ThinkCollege.net (Congratulations class of 2019!, 2019), there are more than 6000 students attending 265 programs in 49 states.



This is good news for their potential for employment, as recent research suggests that inclusive postsecondary education programs for students with intellectual disability is positively correlated with employment (Grigal & Hart, 2012; Grigal, Hart, Smith, Papay, & Domin, 2019; Thoma, 2013). Think College's Fast Facts (2017) reports that 61 % of students who completed an inclusive postsecondary education program, had a paid job one year after graduation. The results are nearly indisputable when compared to a National Core Indicators (2017) report that only 17% of adults with developmental disabilities in the general population has a paid job. Students with intellectual disability who attend college are considerably more likely to obtain competitive integrated employment than those who did not attend college.

However, which program components contribute to the increase in employment remains unclear (Kiernan & Hart, 2011; Lynch & Getzel, 2013; Plotner & Marshall, 2016). Investigation into this relationship for students with intellectual disability on employment outcomes is an important area for continued research, especially since employment leads to increased independence and economic self-sufficiency. A few studies have investigated the relationship between postsecondary education and employment outcomes for students with intellectual disability. Grigal and colleagues (2012) found that 81% of IPSE programs studied indicated that employment training and career preparation were addressed in their program, and a list of employment supports were provided, such as job shadowing, job development and placement services, and job coaching (Grigal et al., 2012). While there is initial survey research regarding employment supports provided in postsecondary programs for students with intellectual disability (Grigal, Papay, Smith, Hart, & Verbeck, 2019), more in-depth investigation is required to identify the program components and activities that lead to increased likelihood of employment after college for this student population. Although such a connection is in development (Grigal et al., 2014), researchers call for a more in-depth look at the factors associated with the college experience and the quality of post-school outcomes (Grigal, Hart, & Weir, 2011).

More than an “Experience”

While college is indeed an important “experience” that many students look forward to, IPSE programs cannot be just “the college experience” for students with intellectual disability. IPSE programs of study must result in meaningful credentials, increased academics, self-determination, independence, and employment. *All students* who complete a postsecondary education program of study, expect to graduate with a credential respected by the business community.

When establishing an inclusive postsecondary education program, it is important to start with the end in mind and ask questions such as:

- What credentials are already available at my college that students with intellectual disability may earn?

If none are available then ask:

- What are my community’s labor market needs?
- What credentials align to the market’s needs?
- What credentials align with my college’s unique strengths?
- What program of study leads to the credential?

While a number of IPSE credentials exist, each credential must be meaningful and valued by your institution, community, and employers. More specific information on existing credentials can be found in the third brief in this series; # 3 *Exploring Existing Credentials*.



Acronyms, Terms & Resources

APSE: APSE, the Association of People Supporting Employment First, is the only national organization with an exclusive focus on integrated employment and career advancement opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

Competitive Integrated Employment: Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE), real work for real pay is the gold standard of transition outcomes for students with disabilities. The work should align with the post-school employment goals of the student and is the desired transition outcome for all students with disabilities who choose to work, regardless of disability or needed accommodations or support. CIE should be a realistic and desirable expectation for all students.

CTP: Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Program; a set of federal guidelines, set out in HEOA of 2008, that defines an inclusive postsecondary education program for individuals with intellectual disability. Students attending institutions of higher education, who apply for and receive CTP approval, may access specific Federal Student Aid. See [CTP requirements](#) or the [FCIHE Brief 1.17](#) for more information.

Employment First: Employment First, means that employment in the general workforce should be the first and preferred option for individuals with disabilities receiving assistance from publicly funded systems. Simply put, Employment First means real jobs, real wages. See <http://www.employmentfirstfl.org/> for more Florida specific information.

FCIHE: Florida Consortium on Inclusive Higher Education, www.FCIHE.com

FCSUA: Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities, www.FCSUA.org

FPCTP: Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Program

HEOA: Higher Education Opportunity Act (2008)

ID: Intellectual disability is characterized by significant limitations in both intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior, which covers many everyday social and practical skills. This disability originates before the age of 18. Generally, an IQ test score 70 or below indicates an intellectual disability.

IHE: Institution of higher education, a university, state, or technical college

IPSE: Inclusive Postsecondary Education Program; enrollment in an on-campus college program, in which students with intellectual disability attend academically inclusive college courses, engage in campus clubs and activities with their peers without disability, increase personal development and life skills, earn a career focused credential with the goal of integrated competitive employment upon graduation.

PCP: Person-Centered Planning; for more information go to <http://project10.info/Star.php>

PoS: Program of Study; the required courses, internships, and activities a student must complete to earn the credential.

SAP: Satisfactory Academic Progress; the successful accomplishment of a set of expectations for the IHE and/or Program of Study in which the student is enrolled. Accomplishment of SAP is required to retain state and federal scholarships and/or financial aid eligibility.

ThinkCollege: Think College is the National Coordinating Center for the Federal TPSID projects, www.ThinkCollege.net. See Think College for a list of the National TPSID programs.

TPSID: A federal discretionary program to increase and enhance inclusive postsecondary education for students with intellectual disability. Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disability. See www.FCIHE.com for a list of Florida's TPSID programs and contacts.

TRIO: is a title for a group of federal outreach and student services programs designed to identify and provide services for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds and includes Upward Bound, Talent Search, /student Support Services, Educational Opportunity Centers, R.E. McNair Post baccalaureate Achievement Program and Upward Bound Math/Science program. Florida TRIO programs <http://faeopp.weebly.com/>

VR: Vocational Rehabilitation, Florida Department of VR, <http://www.rehabworks.org/>

WIOA: The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Acts (2014) is a comprehensive federal law, intended to streamline, consolidate, and improve workforce development and training services for various groups, including youth and workers with disabilities.

References

- Becht, K., Roberts-Dahm, L. D., Meyer, A., Giarrusso, D., & Still-Richardson, E. (in press). Inclusive postsecondary education programs of study for students with intellectual disability. *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*.
- Blumberg, R., Carroll, S., & Petroff, J. G. (2008). Career and community studies: An inclusive liberal arts programme for youth with intellectual disabilities. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 12, 621-637. doi: 10.1080/13603110802377672
- Butler, L.N., Sheppard-Jones, K., Whaley, B., Harrison, B., & Osness, M. (2016). Does participation in higher education make a difference in life outcomes for students with intellectual disability? *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 44, 295-298. doi: 10.3233/JVR-160804
- Cranston-Gingras, A., Davis, D., Gonzalez, G., Knollman, G., Thomas, D., & Wissner, A. (2015). Going to college: A campus-based partnership for students with intellectual disabilities. *School-University Partnerships*, 8(2), 63-71.
- Grigal, M., Hart, D., Smith, F.A., Domin, D., & Weir, C. (2017). *Think College National Coordinating Center: Annual report on the transition and postsecondary programs for students with intellectual disabilities (2014-2015)*. Boston, MA: University of Massachusetts Boston, Institute for Community Inclusion.
- Grigal, M., Hart, D., Smith, F., Papay, C., & Domin, D. (2019). Executive Summary of the Year Three Annual Report of the TPSID Model Demonstration Projects (2017-2018). Think College Fast Facts, Issue No. 19. Boston, MA: University of Massachusetts Boston, Institute for Community Inclusion.
- Grigal, M., Hart, D., & Weir, C. (2011). *Think College standards, quality indicators, and benchmarks for inclusive higher education*. Boston, MA: University of Massachusetts Boston, Institute for Community Inclusion. Retrieved from http://www.thinkcollege.net/images/stories/standards_F.pdf
- Grigal, M. & Hart, D. (2012). The power of expectations. *Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities*, 9, 221-222. doi: 10.1111/jppi.12014
- Grigal, M., Papay, C., Smith, F., Hart, D., & Verbeck, R. (2019). Experiences that predict employment for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities in federally funded higher education programs. *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals*, 42(1), 17-28. doi: 10.1177/2165143418813358
- Kiernan, W.E., & Hart, D. (2011). You have come a long way baby, but not far enough? *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 35, 181-183. doi: 10.3233/JVR-2011-0568
- Kober, R., & Eggleton, I. R. C. (2005). The effect of different types of employment on quality of life. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 49, 756–760. doi: 10.1111/j.1365- 2788.2005.00746.x
- Lee, S. (2009). *Overview of the Federal Higher Education Opportunity Act*. Think College. Boston, MA: University of Massachusetts Boston, Institute for Community Inclusion.
- Lynch, K. D. & Getzel, E. E. (2013). Practice brief: Assessing impact of inclusive postsecondary education using the Think College standards. *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*, 26(4), 385-393.
- Madaus, J. W., Kowitt, J. S., & Lalor, A. R. (2012). The Higher Education Opportunity Act: Impact on students with disabilities. *Rehabilitation Research, Policy & Education*, 26(1), 33-41.
- McEathron, M. A., Beuhring, T., Maynard, A., & Mavis, A. (2013). Understanding the diversity: A taxonomy for postsecondary education programs and services for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*, 26(4), 303-320.

Florida IPSE Credential Guidance Brief: #1 IPSE Background

- Papay, C., Trivedi, K., Smith, F., and Grigal, M. (2017). One year after exit: A first look at outcomes of students who completed TPSIDs. *Think College Fast Facts, Issue No. 17*. Boston, MA: University of Massachusetts Boston, Institute for Community Inclusion.
- Siperstein, G. N., Parker, R. C., & Drascher, M. (2013). National snapshot of adults with intellectual disabilities in the labor force. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, 39*, 157-165. doi: 10.3233/JVR-130658.
- Thoma, C. A. (2013). Postsecondary education for students with intellectual disability (ID): Complex layers. *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability, 26*(4), 287-311.

The development of this Credential Brief was funded by the University of Central Florida through a grant from the Office of Postsecondary Education, United States Department of Education (CFDA 84,407A, P407A150068-18). However, the contents of the Credential Brief do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

Recommended citation for this brief: Florida Consortium on Inclusive Higher Education. (2019). *Florida inclusive postsecondary education credential guidance brief: IPSE background*. Retrieved from www.fcihe.com/resources.