



T-STEP Program



TEACCH School Transition to Employment and Post-Secondary Education



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the T-STEP?

The T-STEP is a community college class supporting the transition to adulthood for 16-21 year old students with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The T-STEP is a collaboration with the University of North Carolina TEACCH Autism Program, the North Carolina Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (NCDVRS), and North Carolina community colleges.

What skill areas does the T-STEP cover?

There are four main intervention areas:

- Goal Achievement Skills – These modules involve choosing and working towards the individual's goals in several areas of their life.
- Executive Function Skills – These modules target approaching tasks in an organized manner, time management and flexibility.
- Emotion Regulation Skills – These modules target coping with stress and accepting corrective feedback.
- Social Skills – These modules target speaking up for yourself and getting answers and information you need, and social skills for college and work.

Program Cost?

The T-STEP is funded by the NCDVRS through a Pre-Employment Transition Services grant. Before enrollment, all participants need to become clients of NCDVRS who can refer them to the T-STEP Program.

Is there a textbook for the T-STEP class?

No, there is no textbook. Each student will receive materials for the class, free of charge, including the T-STEP workbook and semester planner. These materials are distributed during class.

What does the T-STEP involve?

During the academic year, the T-STEP is a 12-week program taking approximately 6-7 hours per week and includes:

- Twice weekly class (1 ½ hour for each class period) including group discussions, role plays, and workbook activities.
- One-hour meeting every other week for internship and goal planning with a T-STEP counselor.
- One-hour meeting for counseling (Self-Advocacy, Higher Education or Career Exploration), with a T-STEP counselor.
- Approximately two hours a week working in their T-STEP internship.

During the summer, the T-STEP is a 6-week program meeting 4 days/week for a total of 12-14 hours per week.

Who teaches the T-STEP?

Classes are co-facilitated by TEACCH autism specialists and community college instructors.

Where is the T-STEP currently offered?

Currently, this program is being offered at Wake Tech Community College (Raleigh), Central Piedmont Community College (Charlotte), Pitt Community College (Greenville), Cape Fear Community College (Wilmington), and AB Tech Community College (Asheville). The T-STEP program will not be offered every semester at each college. Across the next year, the T-STEP will be offered at each of these sites at least once. We cannot guarantee a specific semester for program participants. Please refer any potentially eligible individuals to the T-STEP Program as soon as possible for the upcoming Summer 2019, Fall 2019, and Spring 2020 semesters so that we can confirm which colleges will be able to provide the program during the next year.

ELIGIBILITY FAQ'S

What are the eligibility requirements of the T-STEP? How will I know if an individual qualifies?

Participants in the T-STEP program must have a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder. Be at least 16 and not older than 22 (specific ages vary by college.) Participants must be enrolled in the future ready diploma track in high school or have graduated with a regular diploma. Eligibility status will be determined by NCDVRS counselors.

Can an individual attend the T-STEP if they are enrolled at a college where the T-STEP is not offered?

Yes, many of the T-STEP students attend other community college or four-year universities.

Is transportation provided?

No, transportation to the community college campus is not provided and must be arranged by the T-STEP participant and his/her family.

What if an individual is in the OCS course of study? Can they participate in the T-STEP?

No, the T-STEP requires a regular diploma and is for individuals who can participate in college level courses. This program is not for someone who graduated with an OCS diploma.

Can students still in high school participate in the T-STEP?

Yes, for some community colleges, high school students can participate in the T-STEP although the program is offered during the day on community college campuses. Contact us for specific information for your local community college.

If the individual is not their own guardian, can they participate in the program?

It is not required that participants are their own guardian. Most participants in the T-STEP program are their own guardians if they are over 18, but it is not a requirement.

STEPS FOR ATTENDING THE PROGRAM

1) Referral from North Carolina Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Participants need a referral from a NCDVRS counselor in order to attend the T-STEP program. NCDVRS encourages individuals and families to call the NC office closest to their home address to ask about a referral to the T-STEP program.

2) Intake

After referral to the T-STEP, participants and their caregivers will be asked to visit their local UNC TEACCH Autism Program outpatient clinic for an intake. This visit takes approximately two hours and will include an interview, review of history, discussion about the T-STEP and signing of releases. This meeting is an opportunity for the participant and their family to have their questions about the T-STEP answered.

3) Skills Assessment and Goal Planning

Prior to the start of class, each participant will have a transition readiness skills assessment and goal planning meeting. This meeting will last two hours and will take place at the community college where the T-STEP program will be held. This meeting is also an opportunity for the participant to familiarize themselves with the campus prior to the start of class, if necessary.

OTHER QUESTIONS ABOUT THE T-STEP PROGRAM

Do participants receive college credit for the T-STEP Program?

No, the T-STEP is not a for-credit course. T-STEP is administrated through Life Long Learning, or Continuing Education at the individual community colleges. Some community colleges will show the T-STEP course on transcripts. Individuals participating in the T-STEP program are encouraged to list the T-STEP course and their T-STEP internship on their resumes. Participants can also request a letter of recommendation from their internship supervisors, as appropriate.

If an individual is taking a full load of college classes, can the T-STEP fit into their schedule?

During the academic year, most individuals participating in the T-STEP program do not take more than three other classes in addition to the T-STEP. Participants who are already on the campus where the T-STEP is taught have an easier time taking a heavier load.

In addition to the time spent in class, counseling and internship, is homework also required for the T-STEP?

A brief "Skill Work for Home" is typically assigned one time each week. These exercises are designed to provide an opportunity for participants to share the information from their class with their parents and family, and to begin to use the tools and strategies outside of class.

Can an individual participate in the T-STEP Program if they are unaware of their diagnosis of Autism?

No, autism is not usually discussed during class, but there is discussion and an activity about ASD during the Self-Advocacy counseling. The focus of Self-Advocacy counseling is understanding yourself, your strengths and challenges and ASD is a part of this understanding. Thus, participants need to know they have a diagnosis of ASD.

What is the individual doesn't think they need help with the T-STEP topics? Would the T-STEP be beneficial for them?

The T-STEP is a seminar class on a college campus with the expectation that all students will participate in class discussions and activities. If students are unsure about participation, this is a good topic for discussion at the initial intake meeting.



If you have questions or need more information, please contact Eva Scardina-Keele, T-STEP Services Coordinator, at 919-843-9505 or TSTEPinfo@med.unc.edu