

Aggies Elevated

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Frequently Asked Questions

What is Aggies Elevated?

Aggies Elevated is a two-year certificate program at Utah State University designed to make the college experience accessible for students with intellectual and other developmental disabilities. One of more than 200 postsecondary programs in the U.S. for students with disabilities, Aggies Elevated seeks to provide college students with learning opportunities leading to independence, employment, and career development.

What is the goal of Aggies Elevated?

We provide the opportunity for the student to learn and live independently while acquiring skills suited to his or her chosen career pathway. The program is based on the principles of maximizing opportunities, inclusive experiences, and life-long learning.

Who is this program intended for?

We focus on students who have intellectual and developmental disabilities such as Down syndrome and Autism. Documentation of disability, i.e., a Psychological Evaluation and Summary of Performance upon exit from high school, is required.

Does a student need a high school diploma to apply to Aggies Elevated?

No, we accept students with and without diplomas. A Certificate of Completion is accepted. See below:

- If a student has a high school diploma with at least a 2.5 GPA and an ACT score of 17 or better, then regular admission to Utah State University is the preferred option. Students can apply online at apply.usu.edu.
- If a student meets USU admission requirements but requires academic support or accommodation, we can help the student access appropriate services, however, Aggies Elevated is probably



Aggies Elevated students live in campus housing, attend classes and take advantage of everything a residential college experience has to offer.

not the preferred option. The student may be eligible to enroll in selected Aggies Elevated coursework in preparation for regular college coursework.

- Whether or not a student has a high school diploma, if he or she does not have a 2.5 GPA or an ACT of 17, Aggies Elevated IS a viable option. Admission will be competitive.

What is the application process?

We follow the same timeline as USU for accepting applications. The application packet, including instructions, for the 2015-2016 school year will be available

for download on Feb. 1, 2015. Completed applications will be due in our office by April 1, 2015. Applications must be submitted through the website: www.Aggieselevated.com/apply

Note: Do not complete a USU general admissions application if you intend to apply to Aggies Elevated.

- Parents and students must fill out a series of questions and submit letters of referral to the program. We will look through the applications and interview applicants and their parents individually to make final admission decisions.

- Application is competitive. We will only accept up to 8 students per year.

What do we consider in applications to the Aggies Elevated program?

- The number one factor leading to success in this program is the student's desire to live and learn on a college campus. Students must be willing to challenge themselves, work hard, and focus their energy.
- Students must have basic self-management and study skills. Although the social experience is important, we stress active learning in integrated, inclusive college courses.
- Students must have independent skills to get up on their own, live in a dorm, and navigate new places safely.
- Students who have behavioral issues that would impede their learning or the learning of others will not be accepted. We do, however, offer courses to enhance social skills, self-advocacy, and self-determination.

Are high school students who receive special education services eligible for Aggies Elevated on a concurrent enrollment basis?

No. Special education services must have been permanently discontinued by virtue of a diploma, certificate of completion at the end of post-high school involvement, or other agreement.

Do students live on campus?

Aggies Elevated students live in campus housing alongside their fellow Utah State Aggies and have full access to all student facilities, activities, clubs, sports events and other experiences that are part of life on a residential college campus.

- Note: Aggies Elevated is **not** a 24-hour structured program. Students live in dorms with roommates. We do not have some-*

one watching them at all times. Resident Assistants (RAs) are available but are not in dorms at all times.

What courses are Aggies Elevated students taking?

All students take the same courses in the first semester, including study skills, orientation to campus and community, USU Connections (i.e., freshmen orientation), and career exploration. At mid-semester, an individualized plan is established for the remainder of the two-year program. Courses in later semesters will include vocational and personal electives, and work internships. Recommended courses include health and wellness, career-related social skills, self-determination, and money management.

Are Aggies Elevated students taking courses with other college students?

The majority of courses are integrated and available to other USU students. Most courses are taught by USU instructors. Locations of courses vary across the Logan campus, and some courses may be online. There is no "location" for Aggies Elevated other than an office area for staff.

What are the expected academic levels, such as reading, writing, and math?

Our student's skill levels vary. To succeed in a college environment, students must enter with relatively high achievement in reading, writing, and math.

Are courses taken for college credit?

It depends on each individual student's plan and course requirements. In most cases, we start with the expectation that a student takes a course for credit along with other USU students. Pass/Fail or Audit can be arranged if necessary.

What additional supports do Aggies Elevated students receive?

- All students register with the USU Disability Resource Center and receive needed accommodations such as note taking, extended time on tests, or various forms of assistive technology (AT).
- Tutors serve as academic experts for each of the courses a student might take. The tutors hold study groups, quiz students before tests, and support academic performance.
- Mentors work with individual students up to 10 hours a week with goal setting, time management, skill acquisition, homework, and social integration.
- We introduce students to AT devices that provide accommodations in areas in which they may struggle. Some of our students use iPads, and computer voice-to-text function to type their papers and assignments. Others have smart-pens for recording lectures to review later. We will support needed accommodations.

Is financial aid available for Aggies Elevated?

At this time, the program does not qualify for federal financial aid. We are working towards approval.

How much does the program cost?

We follow the same tuition structure as USU. Students of USU employees receive a discount on tuition. Non-residents pay out-of-state tuition.

Does the Aggies Elevated program adhere to ThinkCollege Standards for inclusive Postsecondary Education?

Yes. The Aggies Elevated Program follows the standards, including quality indicators and benchmarks (<http://www.thinkcollege.net/resources-database/item/t-110/1542>). Aggies Elevated also consults with ThinkCollege staff on a regular basis.

Aggies Elevated is a program at the Center for Persons with Disabilities, a unit of the Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services at Utah State University.

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