Introduction A disability may add to the challenges faced by young adults during the school-to-work transition. Few studies have examined differences in soft (e.g., scheduling modification) and hard accommodation need (e.g., ergonomic adaptation) among disabled young adults, and the factors associated with accommodation need.

Methods An online survey was conducted of 155 Canadian disabled young adults (mean age=25.8±5.1). Respondents were either employed or seeking employment, and recruited using a registry from a national disability organisation. Respondents were asked about their need for 16 soft and hard accommodations. Demographic (e.g., gender), health (e.g., disability type, work limitations), and work characteristics (e.g., work status, hours worked/week, permanent vs short-term contract) were collected. Participants were also asked about perceived barriers to accessing accommodations using eight items (e.g., disclosure difficulties, cost of accommodation). Multivariable logistic analyses were conducted to examine the factors associated with soft and hard accommodation need.

Result Most participants reported psychological (79%) and learning disabilities (45%), and 68% had >1 disability. Over half (55%) were employed at the time of the survey, and 80% worked in non-standard employment conditions (e.g., part-time or short-term work). An average of five perceived accommodation barriers were indicated. More soft accommodations (mean=6.3, 95% CI: 6.00 to 6.30) were needed than hard accommodations (mean=4.9, 95% CI: 4.60 to 5.20). Soft accommodation need was associated with less perceived accommodation barriers (OR=0.83, 95% CI: 0.73 to 0.94), not working (OR=0.39, 95% CI: 0.16 to 0.91) and greater work limitations (OR=1.1, 95% CI: 1.01 to 1.12). Hard accommodation need was associated with less perceived accommodation barriers (OR=0.88, 95% CI: 0.78 to 0.99).

Discussion Offering soft accommodations may be a particularly important strategy for organisations to support the employment of disabled young adults. Interventions that address perceived barriers to accessing accommodations may result in a greater requirement for workplace supports that benefit the school-to-work transition.