



Key Differences Between High School and College for Students with Disabilities

APPLICABLE LAWS

HIGH SCHOOL

- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- IDEA is about SUCCESS in school.

COLLEGE

- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), Title II.
- Section 504 Subpart E of the Rehabilitation Act.
- ADA and 504 are about ACCESS, success is up to the student.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

HIGH SCHOOL

- Individualized Education Program (IEP) and/or 504 Plan.
- School provides evaluation at no cost.
- Documentation focuses on determining if student is eligible for services under one or more disability categories in IDEA.

COLLEGE

- High school IEP and 504 Plans expire after high school and are not sufficient. Documentation guidelines specify information needed for each category or disability.
- Students must get evaluation at their own expense.
- Documentation must provide information on specific functional limitations and demonstrate the need for specific accommodations.

SELF-ADVOCACY

HIGH SCHOOL

- School staff identify the student as having a disability.
- School staff has primary responsibility for arranging accommodations.
- Teachers approach you if they believe you need assistance.

COLLEGE

- Student must self-identify to Access Office staff.
 - Student has responsibility for self-advocacy and arranging accommodations with Student Accessibility Services.
 - Professors can be open and helpful, but students are expected to initiate contact at the start of each term.
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PARENTAL ROLE

HIGH SCHOOL

- Parent has access to student records and can participate in the accommodation process.
- Parent advocates for the student.

COLLEGE

- Parent does not have access to student records and cannot represent the student without the student's written consent. Even then, access is limited.
- Student advocates for self.

INSTRUCTION

HIGH SCHOOL

- Teachers may modify curriculum and alter assignments as outlined in IEP.
- Students are expected to read short assignments that are discussed and often re-taught in class.
- Students seldom need to read assignments more than once, often listening in class is enough.

COLLEGE

- Professors are not required to modify design or alter assignment deadlines.
- Students are assigned substantial amounts of reading and writing which may be tested but not be directly addressed in class.
- Students need to regularly review class notes and text material.

GRADES AND TESTS

HIGH SCHOOL

- IEP or 504 plan may include modifications to test format or grading.
- Testing frequently covers only small amounts of material.
- Makeup tests are usually available.
- Teachers often take time to remind students of assignments and due dates.

COLLEGE

- Grading and test format changes (e.g., multiple choice vs. essay) are generally not available. Accommodations in HOW tests are administered (e.g., extended time, private room for testing) are available when supported documentation.
 - Testing is generally periodic and may be cumulative, covering large amounts of material.
 - Makeup tests are seldom an option; if they are, students are responsible for requesting them in advance.
 - Professors expect students to read, save, and consult the course syllabus that describes course expectations, assignments and grading scale.
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STUDY RESPONSIBILITIES

HIGH SCHOOL

- Tutoring and study support may be a service provided as part of an IEP or 504 plan.
- School staff often structure students' time and expected assignments.
- Students may study outside class for as little as 0 to 2 hours a week and this may be mostly last-minute test preparation.

COLLEGE

- Tutoring DOES NOT fall under Student Accessibility Services. Students with disabilities must seek out tutoring resources available to all college students.
- Students structure their own time and assignments.
- Students usually need to study at least 2 to 3 hours for each hour in class.
- Students manage their own time and complete assignments independently.

GENERAL DIFFERENCES

HIGH SCHOOL

- High school is an entitlement.
- High school is mandatory and usually free.
- Others structure your time.
- Permission is needed to participate in extracurricular activities.
- Parents and teachers remind you of your responsibilities and assist you in setting priorities and goals.

COLLEGE

- College is a choice or privilege, a right to access.
 - College is voluntary and costly.
 - You manage your own time.
 - The decision to participate in co-curricular or extracurricular activities is yours.
 - Balancing your time and setting priorities is now your responsibility.
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