



Differences Between High School And College

It is important that students and families recognize and understand the differences between high school and college before making a decision about whether to attend college or explore other options.

The charts below describe the differences in key areas that impact student learning.

APPLICABLE LAWS

High School

- Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)
- IDEA is about *Success*

College

- Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Title 11)
- ADA is about *Access*

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

High School

- IEP (Individual Education Plan) and/or 504 Plan
- School provides evaluation at no cost to student or family
- Documentation focuses on determining whether student is eligible for services based specific disability categories in IDEA

College

- High school IEP and 504 are not sufficient
- Documentation guidelines specify information needed for each category of disability
- Student must get evaluation at own expense
- Documentation must provide information on specific functional limitations and demonstrate the need for specific accommodations

SELF-ADVOCACY

High School

- Student is identified by the school and is supported by parents and teachers
- Primary responsibility for arranging accommodations belongs to the school
- Teachers approach you if they believe you need assistance

College

- Student must self-identify to the college disability services office
- Primary responsibility for self-advocacy and arranging accommodations belongs to the student
- Professors are usually open and helpful, but most expect you to initiate contact if you need assistance

PARENTAL ROLE

High School

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

College

- Parent does not have access to student records without student's written consent
- Student advocates for self

INSTRUCTION

High School

- Teachers may modify curriculum and/or alter curriculum pace of assignments
- You are expected to read short assignments that are then discussed and often re-taught in class
- You seldom need to read anything more than once, sometimes listening in class is enough

College

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

GRADES AND TESTS

High School

- IEP or 504 plan may include modifications to test format and/or grading
- Testing is frequent and covers small amounts of material
- Makeup tests are often available
- Teachers often take time to remind you of assignments and due dates

College

- Grading and test format changes (i.e. multiple choice vs. essay) are generally not available.
- Accommodations to HOW tests are given (extended time, test proctors) are available when supported by disability documentation.
- Testing is usually infrequent and may be cumulative, covering large amounts of material
- Makeup tests are seldom an option; if they are, you need to request them
- Professors expect you to read, save, and consult the course syllabus (outline); the syllabus spell out exactly what is expected of you, when it is due, and how you will be graded

STUDY RESPONSIBILITIES

High School

- Tutoring and study support may be a service provided as part of an IEP or 504 plan
- Your time and assignments are structured by others
- You may study outside class as little as 0 to 2 hours a week, and this may be mostly last-minute test preparation

College

- Tutoring DOES NOT fall under college disability services. Students with disabilities must seek out tutoring resources as they are available to all students
- You manage your own time and complete assignments independently
- You need to study at least 2 to 3 hours outside of class for each hour in class

Information from the Office of Disability Support Services, University of North Carolina at Pembroke; Pembroke, NC 28372-1510



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