

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE DISABILITY SERVICES

College is a very new and different environment from the secondary or high-school environment that you may be used to. The student goes from an environment that is structured to “**ensure student success**” (high school) to one that is designed to “**allow equal access**” (college). The success of the student is up to the student in the college setting. **The college must ensure access, NOT success.**

There are no IEPs, 504 plans, or special education programs at the college level. Colleges must comply solely with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Postsecondary institutions are **required** to:

- *Make all programs and services physically accessible to all students*
- *Provide auxiliary aids, notetakers, and appropriate equipment to ensure the participation of students with disabilities in college classes and activities*
- *Accommodate the academic participation of qualified students with disabilities in college classes and activities*

Postsecondary institutions are **not required** to:

- *Provide academic modifications if these modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the course or program or place undue burden on the institution*
- *Diagnose a disability or conduct testing and assessment of disabilities*
- *Provide personal attendants or case managers*
- *Provide personal or private tutors*
- *Prepare “Individualized Education Programs” (IEPs)*

Differences in Policies and Procedures	
High School	College
The school is responsible for identifying students with disabilities	The student must self-identify or disclose their disability
The school must provide the assessment of disability, classify disability, and involve parents	The student must provide documentation of their disability to the designated office
School staff will discuss academic progress with parents or legal guardians	The student is considered an adult with privacy and confidentiality protections. Staff cannot talk with parents or legal guardians about the student's academic progress
The school must develop an Individualized Educational Program	The student must request specific accommodations and provide supporting evidence through documentation
Parents and teachers guide and intervene on the student's behalf, recommending strategies and supports	Students need to self-advocate, articulate their needs for services and accommodations proactively , and pursue resources on campus for assistance
Each teacher is aware of a student's IEP and/or 504 Plan usually before the student begins class	Student must initiate communication regarding accommodations with their professors each semester

Differences in Courses	
High School	College
Class attendance is mandatory and monitored carefully	Students are expected to follow the instructor's attendance policy as stated in the syllabus
Teachers will usually approach students who are having academic difficulties	Students are responsible for asking the instructor and/or tutoring center for help
Teachers remind students of assignment due dates	Students are responsible for keeping track of their projects, assignments, and due dates
Teachers will often provide extra credit to help students raise their grades	Extra credit assignments are not frequently given
Teachers present information to help the student understand the textbook	Instructors may not follow the textbook, but lectures enhance the topic

Differences in Accommodations	
High School	College
Reasonable accommodations may be made to ensure success in coursework	Reasonable accommodations may be made to provide equal access and participation
Modifications that change course outcomes (modified curriculum, alter pace/lower frequency of assignments, etc.) may be offered based on the IEP	The college is not required to lower or effect substantial modifications to essential course requirements
Appropriate accommodations are determined by the student's Individualized Educational Plan (IEP)	Appropriate accommodations must be determined based on the student's disability documentation and individual needs

Differences in Parent's or Legal Guardian's Role	
High School	College
Legal guidance is provided by IDEA	Legal guidance is provided by Section 504 and ADA
Periodic progress reports are given to parents	No progress reports will be given to parents
Teachers are free to approach parents without consent from student to discuss student's progress	Without a release of information signed by the student, faculty/staff legally cannot include parents in any part of the educational process
The parent is expected to advocate for the student	The student is expected to advocate on their own behalf