

## DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL & POST SECONDARY DISABILITY SERVICES

There is no Special Education at the college level. Educational rights covered by IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) do not apply to postsecondary education. Colleges must comply with ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the civil Rights Restoration Act. College students have civil rights, but not “education” rights.

Postsecondary institutions are **required** to:

- *Make all programs and services physically accessible to all students*
- *Provide supplementary 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 specific supplementary aids as long as the college provides a method of assistance that allows equal opportunity*
- *Provide academic modifications if these modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the course or program or place undue burden on the institution*
- *Lower admission criteria for applicants with disabilities*
- *Diagnose a disability or conduct testing and assessment of learning difficulties, physical, or mental impairments*
- *Provide paraprofessionals, personal or private tutors*
- *Provide “Individualized Education Programs” (IEP’s)*

<b>Differences in Policies and Procedures</b>	
<b>High School</b>	<b>Post-Secondary</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school is responsible for identifying students with disabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student must self-identify or disclose his/her disability</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school must provide the assessment of disability, classify disability, and involve parents or guardians</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student must provide documentation of his/her disability to the designated office</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School staff will discuss academic progress with parents or legal guardians</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an Individualized Educational Program (IEP) or 504 plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student must request specific accommodations and provide supporting evidence through documentation</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school must provide a free and appropriate education including modified program and appropriate related services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student must act as independent adults to activate and obtain accommodations and structure weekly schedules</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school must coordinate the provision of all services, monitor progress, and evaluate results</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The college must provide reasonable accommodations for students who qualify</li> </ul>
<b>Differences in Accommodations</b>	
<b>High School</b>	<b>Post-Secondary</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services include individually designed instruction, modifications, and accommodations based on the IEP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reasonable accommodations may be made to provide equal access and participation</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modifications that change course outcomes may be offered based on the IEP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The college is not required to lower or effect substantial modifications to essential requirements.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate accommodations are determined by the student’s Individualized Educational Plan (IEP)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate accommodations must be determined based on the student’s disability documentation, and individual need</li> </ul>

<b>Differences in Courses</b>	
<b>High School</b>	<b>Post-Secondary</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class attendance is mandatory and monitored carefully</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students are expected to follow the instructor's attendance policy as stated in the syllabus</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers may approach students who are having academic difficulties</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students are responsible to ask the instructor for help</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers remind students of assignment due dates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students are responsible for keeping track of their projects, assignments, and tests dates</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers will provide students with missed information when they are absent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students must approach their instructors for information they missed when absent</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers may provide extra credit assignments to help students raise their grades</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extra credit assignments are not usually given</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make up tests are often available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make up tests may not be an option</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers often present information to help the student understand the textbook</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructors may not follow the textbook, but lectures enhance the topic</li> </ul>
<b>Differences in Self-Advocacy</b>	
<b>High School</b>	<b>Post-Secondary</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student is identified by the school and is supported by parents, teachers, and IEP team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student must self-identify to the Office of Disability Services</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary responsibility for arranging accommodations belongs to the school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary responsibility for self-advocacy and arranging accommodations belongs to the student</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers approach you if they believe you need assistance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professors are usually open and helpful, but most expect you to initiate contact if you need assistance</li> </ul>
<b>Differences in Laws and Parent's or Legal Guardian's Role</b>	
<b>High School</b>	<b>Post-Secondary</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal guidance is provided by IDEA and is about <i>success</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal guidance is provided by Section 504 and ADA and is about <i>access</i></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents must ensure that their child attends school until the age of 16</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents are not required to send child to college</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Periodic progress reports are given to parents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No progress reports will be given to parents</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers are free to approach parents without consent from student (if the student has not reached age of majority) to discuss student's progress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Without a release of information signed by the student the teacher legally cannot include the parents in any part of the educational process</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The parent is the student's legal guardian until he or she reaches age of majority</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In college the student is considered to be his/her own legal guardian unless there is a court order to the contrary</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The parent is expected to advocate for the student</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student is expected to advocate on his/her own behalf</li> </ul>

Adapted from the Institute for Community Inclusion [Differences between High School and College for Students with Disabilities](#)