

## Comparison of Disability in High School and College

**Here is a point-by point comparison of some services and accommodations and the ways in which they differ between high school and college.**

High School	College
Under IDEA, children with disabilities are absolutely <i>entitled</i> to a “Free and Appropriate Public Education.”	<i>Equal access</i> to education is the order of the day – no one is <i>entitled</i> to anything, but rather students have <i>civil rights</i> and they must advocate for themselves in order to enjoy those rights.
Section 504 in the public schools includes “Free and Appropriate Public Education” language, and accommodations may include a shortening of assignments, or the use of notes on tests, when other students cannot use them.	Section 504 is the first civil rights legislation that applied to colleges. It upholds the institution’s right to maintain the academic standards, and no accommodations may be permitted to reduce that standard for any student. Thus there is no “free” education, and shortening assignments and using notes when other students do not are not considered “reasonable accommodations.”
Plans, either the IEP or a 504 Plan, drove all services and accommodations, and involved the teachers, counselors, and absolutely required a parent’s signature.	There is no plan, and instructors are not contacted, except by the student. In fact, parents may not receive even a student’s grades without the student giving written permission.
“Placement” is determined by the child’s “team,” and outlined in the plan, and must, by law, be in the least restrictive environment.	Placement integration is assumed, and is the order of the day. We adjust the environment through accommodations, but we don’t deliberate and select the environment for the student in advance.
Students were qualified for public education simply by being of the appropriate age, and because they had a disability.	“Otherwise qualified,” in college, means that the student must meet all entrance and academic requirements, whether they receive accommodations or not.
Everybody knows about a student’s placement, and practically everybody signs the plan. Each teacher knows about a student even before he or she enters the classroom, and has a good idea what the student’s will need.	Disability Services never contacts a professor without express permission from the student. Thus, the student must initiate all actions regarding accommodation with each professor, for each course, every semester. In addition, students have the civil right to <i>refuse</i> accommodations they don’t need or want; and if they do not request an accommodation it is assumed they do not want it.

<p>Public schools, for the most part, are responsible for appropriate assessment of a student’s disability.</p>	<p>Higher education does not have to assess the student, but can expect that the student will provide proof of their disability within accepted guidelines.</p>
<p>Some subjects may have been waived for a student before graduation, if they were specifically related to the student’s disability.</p>	<p>Substitutions for specific graduation requirements may be requested by following a rigorous petition process, but “waivers” for requirements are <i>never</i> granted. Substitutions are also granted typically after the student has <i>both</i> provided adequate verification to Disability Services of their disability <i>and</i> unsuccessfully attempted the courses in question with the appropriate accommodations recommended by Disability Services.</p>
<p>Labels are a way to categorize people.</p>	<p>Student has a right to disclose to whom and when they choose, but must own their disability in order to enjoy a level playing field.</p>
<p>Assessment, physical or other therapy, or personal care provided by school while in school.</p>	<p>Student is responsible for personal services -- personal care, medical and related requirements, just as if they would if they were living independently and not attending school.</p>
<p>Students often receive “Un-timed tests” if they have a disability.</p>	<p>“Un-timed tests” are not reasonable, but time extensions may be reasonable, typically time-and-a-half but no more than double time.</p>
<p>Teachers may be expected to learn all they can about the disability of a student in one of their classes.</p>	<p>Instructors need know only that which applies to the accommodations the student requests.</p>

PERSONAL FREEDOM IN HIGH SCHOOL	PERSONAL FREEDOM IN COLLEGE
High school is <i>mandatory</i> and <i>free</i> (unless you choose other options).	College is <i>voluntary</i> and <i>expensive</i> .
Your time is usually structured by others.	You manage your own time.
You need permission to participate in extracurricular activities.	You must decide whether to participate in extracurricular activities. ( <i>Hint: Choose wisely in the first semester and then add later.</i> )
You need money for special purchases or events.	You need money to meet basic necessities.
You can count on parents and teachers to remind you of your responsibilities and to guide you in setting priorities.	Guiding principle: You're old enough to take responsibility for what you do and don't do, as well as for the consequences of your decisions.

HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS	COLLEGE INSTRUCTORS
Teachers check your completed homework.	Instructors may not always check completed homework, but they will assume you can perform the same tasks on tests.
Teachers remind you of your incomplete work.	Instructors may not remind you of incomplete work.
Teachers approach you if they believe you need assistance.	Instructors are usually open and helpful, but most expect you to initiate contact if you need assistance.
Teachers are often available for conversation before, during, or after class.	Instructors expect and want you to attend their scheduled office hours.
Teachers have been trained in teaching methods to assist in imparting knowledge to students.	Instructors have been trained as experts in their particular areas of research.
Teachers present material to help you understand the material in the textbook.	Instructors may not follow the textbook. Instead, to amplify the text, they may give illustrations, provide background information, or discuss research about the topic you are studying. Or, they may expect <i>you</i> to relate the classes to the textbook readings.

HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS	COLLEGE INSTRUCTORS
Teachers often write information on the board to be copied in your notes.	Instructors may lecture nonstop, expecting you to identify the important points in your notes. When Instructors write on the board, it may be to amplify the lecture, not to summarize it. Good notes are a must.
Teachers impart knowledge and facts, sometimes drawing direct connections and leading you through the thinking process.	Instructors expect you to think about and synthesize seemingly unrelated topics.
Teachers often take time to remind you of assignments and due dates.	Instructors expect you to read, save, and consult the course syllabus (outline); the syllabus spells out exactly what is expected of you, when it is due, and how you will be graded.

TESTS IN HIGH SCHOOL	TESTS IN COLLEGE
Testing is frequent and covers small amounts of material.	Testing is usually infrequent and may be cumulative, covering large amounts of material. You, not the professor, need to organize the material to prepare for the test. A particular course may have only 2 or 3 tests in a semester.
Makeup tests are often available.	Makeup tests are seldom an option; if they are, you need to request them.
Teachers frequently rearrange test dates to avoid conflict with school events.	Instructors in different courses usually schedule tests without regard to the demands of other courses or outside activities.
Teachers frequently conduct review sessions, pointing out the most important concepts.	Instructors rarely offer review sessions, and when they do, they expect you to be an active participant, one who comes prepared with questions.
Mastery is usually seen as the ability to reproduce what you were taught in the form in which it was presented to you, or to solve the kinds of problems you were shown how to solve.	Mastery is often seen as the ability to apply what you've learned to new situations or to solve new kinds of problems.

GRADES IN HIGH SCHOOL	GRADES IN COLLEGE
Grades are given for most assigned work.	Grades may not be provided for all assigned work.
Consistently good homework grades may help raise your overall grade when test grades are low.	Grades on tests and major papers usually provide most of the course grade.
Initial test grades, especially when they are low, may not have an adverse effect on your final grade.	Watch out for your <i>first</i> tests. These are usually "wake-up calls" to let you know what is expected--but they also may account for a substantial part of your course grade. You may be shocked when you get your grades.
You may graduate as long as you have passed all required courses with a grade of D or higher.	You may graduate only if your average in classes meets the departmental standard--typically a 2.0 or C.
Guiding principle: "Effort counts." Courses are usually structured to reward a "good-faith effort."	Guiding principle: "Results count." Though "good-faith effort" is important in regard to the professor's willingness to help you <i>achieve</i> good results, it will not <i>substitute</i> for results in the grading process.