

## DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE DISABILITY SERVICES

There is no Special Education at the college level. Educational rights covered by IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities 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 no “education” rights.

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 specific auxiliary 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 personal attendants*
- *Provide personal or private tutors*
- *Prepare “Individualized Education Programs” (IEP’s)*

| <b>Differences in Policies and Procedures</b>  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>High School</b>   | <b>College</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</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>• The school must develop an Individualized Educational Program</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>  |

## Differences in Courses

| High School   | College   |
|---|---|
| <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 instructors attendance policy as stated in the syllabus</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers will usually 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 many times will 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 usually 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 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>                     |

## Differences in Accommodations

| High School  | College  |
|--|--|
| <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> |

## Differences in Parent's or Legal Guardian's Role

| High School  | College  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal guidance is provided by IDEA</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal guidance is provided by Section 504 and ADA</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 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</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>  |

## Making the Transition from High School to College for Students with Disabilities:

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### KNOW THE DIFFERENCES

| <b>High School</b>   | <b>College</b>  |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Special Education Model</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School personnel “find you” and decide what eligibility for services and supports</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Accommodations Model</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You must request help; no one will come to find you.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Where you receive services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Special Education classroom, Resource Room, related service provider room (e.g. speech)</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Where you receive services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Differs from one every to another (“Office of Disability Support Services,” “Disabled Student Services,” “Special Services”,...)</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Documentation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinated by school psychologist or CSE appointed staff person</li> <li>School develops IEP from documentation and test results</li> <li>Paid for by school</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Documentation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You must provide “proof” of your disability (e.g. HS records, independent reports e.g. medical, mental health, educational)</li> <li>Colleges can set their own guidelines for documentation ( e.g. no more than 3 years old, adult assessment measures,...)</li> <li>High schools are not required to do a comprehensive evaluation before graduation</li> <li>After HS, you re responsible for paying for new evaluations</li> </ul>                               |
| <p><b>Special Education Law</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) provides the mandate and funding to schools for in-school special education services as well as transportation/ buses to school, physical, occupational, speech therapy, and tutoring</li> </ul> | <p><b>Civil Rights Law</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation</li> <li>Colleges are required only to offer accommodations &amp; support services; not services of a personal nature.</li> <li>Tutoring is not required under ADA. Some colleges offer tutoring through disability services and some colleges have tutoring centers for all students.</li> <li>Foreign Language waivers &amp; other course substitutions are not automatic</li> </ul> |

## INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

**While still in high school you need to:**

**1. Find out about your disability:**

- Talk to your parents, high school special education teacher, or guidance counselor to learn about your specific disabilities
  - Understand the academic impact of your disability
  - Understand your areas of strength and weakness
  - Understand how your disability might affect future employment and/or career choices
  - Make sure that you have current documentation (request updated testing or a re-evaluation before you leave HS)
  - Read your disability documentation and understand what it says.

**2. Actively participate in all transition related meetings (i.e. IEP, 504, IPE)**

- Participate in self-advocacy training
- Learn to express your current and future needs, concerns, interests, and preferences
- Know what your rights & responsibilities are and what the grievance procedures are at your selected colleges

**3. Develop a personal information file with disability related information:**

- Disability documentation
  - Current high school records (e.g. grade transcript, standardized achievement testing scores)
  - Medical records (if relevant to educational progress)
  - Copy of current IEP or 504 plan
  - College Entrance Exam results/ info (SAT, ACT)
  - Psychological and educational evaluation records

**4. Select and Plan College Choices**

- Select the colleges you'd consider attending (important tip: do NOT choose schools by the amount of services that offer; make your initial selections based on whether the school offers the programs of study that most interest you)
- Visit each campus (make sure to meet the person(s) in charge of the Office of Disability Services)
- Do your homework! Consider:
  - What services/programs each prospective college provides through their disability support office or other office that handles disability accommodations
  - How often are services available? Are the service providers on campus and available on an as-needed basis?
  - Are there restrictions (e.g. times per week) or additional costs for using these services?

**5. Apply—Good luck!**

## **KNOWING YOUR OPTIONS**

All colleges are required by law to provide accommodations to students with documented disabilities. Some colleges offer specialized programs that are highly structured and include a wide range of academic and behavioral supports. Other colleges offer support services that are less intensive and that require students to 'take the lead' in monitoring their progress and managing their special needs on campus.

### **Programs vs. Support Services**

- **Programs** are specifically designed for students with disabilities and provide more in-depth services and accommodations. Not all colleges have these types of programs. When offered, the most common types are designed for students with learning disabilities and/or ADHD. These programs usually have costs in addition to tuition. These programs often provide one-on-one tutoring and sessions with a learning disability specialist.
- **Support Services** are the resources available at no cost for students with disabilities. Support services include reasonable accommodations, such as extended time for assignment and testing, note-takers, the use of a calculator, and preferential seating in classrooms.

## **CONGRATULATIONS!** **YOU'VE BEEN ACCEPTED TO A COLLEGE!** **NOW WHAT?**

1. **Register with the college's disability services office or program. Remember you need to:**
  - Contact that campus office—they will not find you.
  - Provide disability documentation that is current & meets college guidelines.
  - Request that accommodations you will need (note-takers, assistive listening devices, testing modifications, textbooks on tape, etc.).
  - Request those accommodations **before** scheduled placement tests or you will not receive accommodations for those tests.
2. **Arrange other supports not provided by the school.**
  - Do you need things like counseling, medication management, or other supports? Who will provide them for you & how will they affect your schedule?
  - Develop back up plans for these supports.

## SELF-ADVOCACY

### **What is Self-Advocacy?**

- Self-advocacy means speaking or acting for yourself
- It means deciding what is best for you and taking charge of getting it.
- It means standing up for your rights as a person.
- It teaches others about our rights and responsibilities.

### **Why is it important?**

- It helps us to develop assertiveness skills & good communication skills.
- It teaches us to make decisions and choices that affect our lives so that we can be more independent.
- It helps us to develop confidence about our abilities.

### **When will I use it (at college)?**

- When you need additional accommodations.
- When you don't have access to some activity on the campus and you need to have that barrier removed.
- When you are having disability-related difficulty in a class and need some extra assistance.

### **How can I practice being a self-advocate?**

- Understand what your disability is and how it affects you
- Understand your rights and responsibilities under the Section 504 of the Rehab Act and the ADA
- Use this information to achieve your goals and advocate for yourself