

SECTION V: FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Family and friends sometimes have a difficult time understanding how their roles will change once a student leaves high school and enters college. In college, students are considered adults, and as such, responsible for their decisions and their actions. Once reasonable accommodations have been arranged, to help “level the playing field,” the DSS student is responsible for how much effort is invested in coursework. DSS students may be very successful, or not, depending on how much effort they invest into their educational process. DSS students are not guaranteed successes, they must earn success, and must be responsible for their own oversight. Below is a chart that may help identify prime differences between high school and college expectations.

POINT-BY-POINT COMPARISON BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

PERSONAL FREEDOM IN HIGH SCHOOL VS. PERSONAL FREEDOM IN COLLEGE	
High school is mandatory and free (unless you choose other options).	College is voluntary and expensive.
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. (Hint: Choose wisely in the first semester and then add later.)
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 VS. COLLEGE PROFESSORS	
Teachers check your completed homework.	Professors 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.	Professors may not remind you of incomplete work.
Teachers approach you if they believe you need assistance.	Professors 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.	Professors expect and want you to attend their scheduled office hours.
Teachers have been trained in teaching methods to assist in imparting knowledge to students.	Professors have been trained as experts in their particular areas of research.

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Teachers present material to help you understand the material in the textbook.	Professors 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 you to relate the classes to the textbook readings.
Teachers often write information on the board to be copied in your notes.	Professors may lecture nonstop, expecting you to identify the important points in your notes. When professors 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.	Professors expect you to think about and synthesize seemingly unrelated topics.
Teachers often take time to remind you of assignments and due dates.	Professors 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 VS. 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.	Professors 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.	Professors 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.

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GRADES IN HIGH SCHOOL VS. 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 first 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 achieve good results, it will not substitute for results in the grading process.

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Federal regulations pertaining to Section 504 in public schools and virtually any other area of public life take somewhat different approaches. Section 504 in public schools, to be fair, is closely aligned with IDEA requirements in federal regulations. This is a reflection of our differing attitudes and expectations of school-aged children as opposed to adults. Here are a few more important distinctions to remember when making the transition from high school 504 services to higher education:

- In higher education -- as well as in employment, public services and public accommodations -- the individual with a disability bears the burden of proof. Unlike public schools, there are no requirements for providing evaluation of individuals with disabilities. The person with a disability must provide the evidence themselves. In public schools, whether under IDEA or Section 504, the school is responsible for adequate and regular assessments. This is no longer the case once a student leaves high school and attends a college or university.
- A 504 Plan from a high school -- or for that matter, an IEP -- is in no way binding upon any institution or entity outside of the school in which it was developed. There are no requirements for any plan under Section 504 or the ADA with respect to higher education, employment or other areas of public life. Thus there are no more meetings each year with counselors, teachers, etc. There is nothing to sign.
- "Free and Appropriate Education" (FAPE), first put forth in law under special education legislation in 1975 no longer applies. Though it is still referenced as a requirement for

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high school under regulations governing Section 504, there are no such references with respect to higher education in any federal regulations for either Section 504 or the ADA. Rather, higher education carries with it necessary costs, and students with disabilities must pay the same as their nondisabled peers. In higher education, then, FAPE is not regarded as a part of 504's nondiscrimination prohibitions. In all areas outside of public schools, nondiscrimination is accomplished by means of barrier removal, including "reasonable accommodations. (*Note: Accommodations may not carry with them an additional charge of any kind, however.*)"

- The term "otherwise qualified individual with a disability" carries a different connotation, and subsequently greater weight and responsibility on the part of the individual than may have been the case in high school, and certainly elementary school. It means that students must meet academic standards. In public schools, this refers only to the age of the individual as being appropriate for elementary or high school. In higher education, it ultimately refers to a student's academic proficiency and ability to demonstrate learning.
- Integration is the order of the day. Terms such as "placement" and "least restrictive environment" are no longer valid. Placement in an environment which is restrictive or protective in any way would be a violation of an individual's civil rights, and counter to the spirit of Section 504 and the ADA.
- Some services provided to high school students under Section 504 may not be provided in higher education, because they in fact reduce the academic standards. Shortening assignments, for example, is viewed as compromising academic standards, and therefore is not "reasonable" to request in college.
- Perhaps the most important result of these differences lies in the changes in expectations for students with disabilities. That is, students with disabilities, such as Learning Disabilities and Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorders, aren't always expected to perform or achieve at the same levels as their peers in high school. In other words, they aren't always expected to learn as much.
- In higher education, therefore, students with disabilities must possess higher level skills in all aspects of learning -- skills and strategies commensurate with the academic expectations in higher education and, later, professional careers. These necessitate more sophisticated strategies in many cases. Reasonable accommodations can create a level playing field, but once achieved, the student must then demonstrate their skills and knowledge adequately.

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Disability Services for Students

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 knew about a student’s placement, and practically everybody signed the plan. Each teacher would know about a student even before he or she entered the classroom, and have a good idea what the student’s needs were.	DSS 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.
Public schools, for the most part, are responsible for appropriate assessment of a student’s disability.	Higher education does not have to assess the student, but can expect that the student will provide proof of their disability within accepted guidelines.
Some subjects may have been waived for a student before graduation, if they were specifically related to the student’s disability.	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 DSS of their disability <i>and</i> unsuccessfully attempted

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	the courses in question with the appropriate accommodations recommended by DSS.
Labels are a way to categorize people.	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.
Assessment, physical or other therapy, or personal care provided by school while in school.	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.
Students often receive “Un-timed tests” if they have a disability.	“Un-timed tests” are not reasonable, but time extensions may be reasonable, typically time-and-a-half but no more than double time.
Teachers may be expected to learn all they can about the disability of a student in one of their classes.	Professors need know only that which applies to the accommodations the student requests.

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