

Use this chart to help prepare students for the differences between high school and college:

| Differences between high school and college | | |
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| Topic | High School | College |
| <i>Applicable federal laws</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IDEA • Section 504 • The ADA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 504. Note, however, that unlike high schools, colleges are not required to provide FAPE. Rather, they must simply provide appropriate academic adjustments as necessary to ensure they don't discriminate on the basis of disability. OCR covers this in more detail in its pamphlet Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities. • The ADA |
| <i>Scheduling</i> | The school day is generally about seven hours long and highly structured. Students move directly from class to class. | Students can plan their own class schedules. Schedules may vary from day to day. There may be large gaps of time between classes. |
| <i>Class environment</i> | Class size may be between 20 to 30 students. | Class formats can be varied, from large lecture halls with hundreds of students to small group discussions, Brickley said. Students need to learn strategies for focusing during lengthy lectures, note-taking, and absorbing and retaining material, said Kathryn Di Tommaso, an associate professor in the English department at Bronx (N.Y.) Community College . |
| <i>Assignments</i> | Grades may be determined by multiple homework assignments, quizzes, and exams. Teachers may remind students frequently of upcoming assignments. | Grades may be determined by only a few assignments, such as a midterm exam, final exam, or paper. Students must make sure they are aware of upcoming assignments and manage their own schedule to complete assignments on time, Brickley said. Students must also know how to use reading and study strategies to prepare for exams on their own, Di Tommaso said. |
| <i>Curriculum</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers usually follow the textbook and give exams based on content they've covered in class. • Academic requirements may be modified by the student's IEP. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students need to gather ideas and materials from a variety of sources. Professors may give exams over content that was assigned in a reading but never discussed in class, Brickley said. • Curriculum requirements are not changed due to a disability. |
| <i>Teacher responsibilities</i> | Teachers may issue frequent reminders of upcoming assignment due dates and exams. Extra help may be built into the student's school day. | Students are given a syllabus with assignments, due dates, and exam dates at the beginning of the semester. Professors have specific "office hours" and may not be as involved as high school teachers, Brickley said. If a student has a question about an assignment or exam, it's up to him to approach the professor and ask, she said. |
| <i>Getting accommodations</i> | All teachers are informed of the student's IEP and disability. Accommodations are set forth in | The student (not the parent) is responsible for disclosing his disability to the college if he wishes to request accommodations, Brickley said. |

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| | the IEP and are guaranteed. | Students must follow the college's procedures to request accommodations and may be required to provide documentation of their disability. Accommodations may not be the same as were granted in high school; colleges are not required to make academic adjustments that would "fundamentally alter the nature of a service, program, or activity, or that would result in an undue financial or administrative burden," according to OCR. |
| <i>Behavior</i> | The student's IEP team informs teachers about the student's social or behavioral difficulties. Misbehavior may not lead to suspension or other removals if it's determined to be due to the student's disability. | No one is informed about the student's social or behavioral issues unless the student himself discloses them. Students must abide by the college's code of conduct and other policies to remain on campus. |
| <i>Grading/passing</i> | Students pass a class and move on. | Students must maintain a minimum GPA to remain enrolled in the college or their desired major. |