



Office of Disability Services

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the major legal differences between high school and college?

Short Answer: Entitlement vs. Eligibility

It is important to remember that disability laws for high school students focus on "success" while applicable laws for postsecondary disability services focus on "equal access." IDEA does not apply to college students.

Let's look at two specific laws and students with disabilities in college.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disability Act require that,

No otherwise "qualified" individuals with disabilities in the United States... shall solely by reason of his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. (29 U.S.C.794)

A person with a disability is an individual with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. An individual is considered to be a person with a disability if he/she (1) has a disability, (2) has a history of a disability, or (3) is perceived by others as having a disability.

Individuals must also be viewed as "otherwise qualified" despite the disability. In other words, unlike elementary and secondary students, postsecondary students must be qualified for acceptance to the college by meeting the admissions criteria, and fulfilling the requirements for staying in college. In addition, the student must also meet essential technical requirements of the program or course.

Reasonable accommodations are also referred to as "academic adjustments" and "auxiliary aids." These accommodations are designed to level the playing field for students with documented disabilities. The law requires postsecondary institutions to provide equal access to course material so that the student with documented disabilities is allowed equal participation in his or her educational experience. Some examples of reasonable accommodations include extended time on tests, testing in a minimally distracting environment, and use of assistive technology. It's important to note that academic adjustments are determined based on individual disabilities and individual needs. In

providing these adjustments, colleges are not required to lower or effect substantial modifications to essential requirements. For example, it may be reasonable accommodation to allow a student extended time for a test, but it is not a requirement to change the substantive content of the tests. Also, a college does not have to make any modifications that would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity. Postsecondary institutions do not have to offer services that would result in undue financial or administrative burdens and colleges do not have to provide services of a “personal” nature.

What are some general differences between high school and college?

Short Answer: High school students tend to take a passive role and depend on their parents and the “system” to meet their needs. College students take an active role and must “step to the plate” and accept responsibility for ensuring that their needs are met.

High School	College
Mandatory and usually free	Voluntary and expensive
Time is structured	Structure you own time
Need permission for activity participation	Activities are up to you
Parents/Teachers guide you	Responsible for yourself
Classes/Times are decided for you	You and your advisor decide classes and times
Most work is done in class	More out of class studying (2-3 hours outside of class for each hour in class)
Textbooks are free	Textbooks are costly
Reading/writing is minimal or balanced	Substantial amounts of reading and writing
Teachers review assignments	Professors give you a syllabi
Teachers give you missed information	You are expected to get missed information from other students
Teachers are trained in teaching methods	Professors are trained in areas they teach – no how to teach
Frequent testing and reviews	Infrequent testing over large amounts of material/little review
Make up test are okay	Make up tests often not allowed
Opportunities for extra credit	Little or no extra credit
You may pass with a D or higher	A grade of C to pass or have a certain GPA to graduate
I.E.P. or 504 plans	Each college has documentation guidelines for a disability
School provides evaluation	You provide evaluation and documentation from a qualified professional
School identifies students with disabilities	You must self-identify to office of disability services
Course modifications	Reasonable accommodations
Grading modifications	No grading and few test format changes
Parents may monitor grades and progress	Grades and progress are confidential

What can help me be successful in college?

Short Answer: Commitment! Attend class and utilize tutoring center daily.

Things to know/do

- Make sure you complete the proper paperwork each semester for the financial aid office, business office, student life, and Disability Services.
- Learn the location of all buildings on campus.
- Read the student handbook.
- Have your student id with you at all times.
- Know the dining hall hours.
- Know the name and location of your dorm RA (resident assistant) and RD (resident director). Practice good roommate etiquette.
- What to do in bad weather – where to go, what to wear, whom to contact for emergencies.
- Know how to write a check, use the ATM, stay on budget, laundry, and how to clean your room.
- Know the name and location of your advisor.
- Order your books before classes begin.
- Learn your class schedule.
- Know your professors' names and contact information. Keep up with assignment due dates and class grades.
- Make a friend in each class to communicate with about class assignments.
- How to use a computer for word processing and how to use assistive technology.

Recommended academic supplies

- Flash drive
- Day planner
- Pens, pencils, erasers, colored pencils, highlighters
- Notebook, paper, graph paper
- Three ring binder and subject dividers
- Spiral notebook
- Index cards
- Scotch Tape

Know your disabilities

- Your diagnosis.
- How your disability impacts you.
- Your strengths and weaknesses.
- Your accommodations.
- What worked to help you in the past.

- What medications you take and when to take them and how to obtain refills.

Call for refills before you run out of medication.
CVS Pharmacy in Cuthbert: 229-732-2191
Shellman Drug in Shellman (delivers): 22-679-5070

- What to do when you are sick.

Southwest Georgia Regional Medical Center: 229-732-2181
Randolph Medical Associates: 229-732-3721

How can parents help students?

Short answer: Give them lots of "P&R." In other words, keep things in "perspective" and provide lots of "reassurance."

Assist your student with self-advocacy skills before he/she leaves the nest and ask the following:

Does my student know their rights under ADA and Section 504 and understand them?

Does my student know how to ask for help?

Assist your student with disability awareness and ask the following:

Does my student know and understand their disabilities?

Does my student understand their documentation and is it current?

Does my student know/understand their strengths and weaknesses?

Assist your student with specific accommodation needs and ask the following:

Does my student know which accommodations have worked in the past and which were not helpful?

Is my student registered with Vocational Rehabilitative Services and know their contact information?

Assist your student with becoming more independent...

Ensure they have independent "living" skills.

Ensure awareness and importance of medications management.

Encourage them to develop their own problem solving and decision making skills.

Foster an adult relationship with your student.

Correspond on a regular basis.

Send care packages and letters.