

Section 3 Transition

Differences between High School and College

Legal

High School	College
Services provided under IDEA or Section 504, Subsection D	Services provided under Section 504, Subsection E of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
School district responsible for identifying and evaluating disability at no cost to student or family	Student must self-identify and provide documentation of disability
School provides evaluation	Student must pay cost of evaluation
School is responsible for the cost of special programming	Postsecondary institutions responsible for costs involved in providing accommodations and/or essential auxiliary aids based on documentation of disability
Provides special programs and comprehensive support services	Postsecondary institution not legally required to provide special programs with comprehensive support services

Academic Environment

High School	College
Tasks more structured	Tasks less structured
Step-by-step instructions given	Student held responsible for developing a method to complete tasks
Grades based on a variety of activities	Grades based on fewer tasks or larger projects; semester grades sometimes based on two or three test scores and exams cover more information
Assignments are modified or shortened	Assignments are not modified or shortened
Extra time given to complete assignments	Assignments must be completed by deadline; students are expected to modify course load in order to meet deadlines (i.e., take fewer courses)
Teachers help prepare students for exams	Students responsible for own exam preparation
Exam questions tend to be objective	Exam questions more difficult to predict; exams require more writing, and essay exams more common
Just memorizing facts may be sufficient to pass tests	Harder work required for earning good grades; more major writing assignments; effective communication skills more important; paying attention in class more important; studying more important
Teachers trained in teacher education programs	Instructors trained in content/skill areas; instruction often provided via lecture; lecture may cover different information than textbook; instructors rarely suggest ways to learn materials; much less direct instructor contact; student must

	be flexible and learn at pace established by instructor
Homework requires limited time	Students spend two to four hours doing homework for every hour spent in class
Homework assigned on a day-to-day basis	Long-range, comprehensive assignments given
Instruction more experiential; student learns by doing and experiencing	Effective reading comprehension skills more important; good notetaking more important; few visual and study aids provided; identifying main ideas more important
Most classes meet every day	Classes may meet less often; less time in the classroom
Most classes have a maximum of 25-30 students	Classes have from 20-500 students
Monitoring of progress done by other people	Student progress may not be monitored closely by instructors; student needs to self-monitor progress
Exam questions may be clarified and paraphrased	Reader for exams read questions only; reads questions exactly as written; no paraphrasing or clarification of questions
Student may rely on external motivators	Self-evaluations; motivation must be internalized
Teachers recognize the need to help students and provide the help	Student must independently seek additional and supplementary sources of information; student must initiate requests for additional help
	Student has opportunity to take web-based course, telecourses or distance learning courses

Responsibility

High School	College
Fewer responsibilities	More independent living (i.e., car, insurance, gas)
Career decisions not expected	Student expected to know career goal
Student assisted with decisions	Increased number of decisions; student expected to make independent decisions
Limits set for student by parents and teachers	More self-evaluation and self-monitoring required; more independent reading and studying required; student establishes and attains own goals; student accountable to whomever pays for education; interest in learning generated by student
Schedule set by school	Students are responsible for designing a schedule of courses in which they can be successful (i.e., type of courses, number of courses, time of day, etc.)
Attendance and progress well monitored	Attendance and progress not monitored
Student's time structured by home and school	Student responsible for managing time and commitments; more "free" time during day; time management and organizational skills critical
Special education teacher liaison between student, other teachers, administrators, and parents	Student determines when help is needed
Help readily available	Student must locate the appropriate resources
Student need not seek out help	Student responsible for self-advocacy; student must self-identify disability and request services;

	student required to provide recent documentation of disability which clearly supports requested accommodations; student must independently seek help using effective communication skills; services must be requested well in advance
Student labeled as “special education”	Student not labeled
Student possibly served separately from other students	Students not served separately from other students
Personnel talk freely with parent about student progress and planning	Other students and faculty will not know about student’s disability without student’s permission; faculty only notified of required accommodations; personnel cannot discuss student without student’s written permission

Stress/Support and Physical Environment

High School	College
Lighter workload; slower pace; less stress	Increased workload; faster pace; more stress; entire course completed in 16 weeks
Fewer social distractions	Student experiences new and increased; social pressures and new social expectations; relationships with family and friends change
More contact with instructors	Less contact with instructors
Less academic competition	Less individual feedback; more academic competition
School must work with students with behavior problems	Behavior problems not tolerated; student more independent and accountable for behavior
Student given structure	Student given a little direction
Goal of secondary education is completion of degree	Goal of postsecondary education is access to opportunities; student expected to know what he/she wants from postsecondary education, classes, life, etc.
Live at home with family and friends for support	Student may leave home where family and friends not readily available for support; personal support network different; student experiences increased financial responsibilities
Most high schools have one building	Most colleges have several buildings and mobility is the responsibility of the student
Home environment with set eating and sleeping patterns	Student is responsible for own meals and sleep if living away from home

Differences between Vocational-Technical Schools, Community Colleges, and Bachelor Degree/Colleges and Universities

Vocational Technical Schools	Community Colleges	Four-Year Colleges/Universities
Prepare for a specific occupation through skills training	Offer associate degrees and certificates in variety of areas; other programs academic based	Multitude of degrees; associates, bachelor, and graduate programs
Integrate academic curriculum with hands-on	Some certificate programs may be hands-on	Few hands-on programs; most academic based
Tuition varies	Tuition is reasonably priced	More costly; charge higher tuition and fees
Typically no residential halls	Typically no residential halls	Option for residence hall living or commuting
Admissions requirements vary	Open admissions; some majors have selective admissions requirements	Competitive admissions
Public or proprietary	Public or proprietary	Public or private
Support services vary	Typically offer more support services and allow more time for adjustment to college life	Requires quicker adjustment to independent life
Smaller student/teacher ratio	Smaller student/teacher ratio	Tend to be larger both physically and student/teacher ratio

What to Expect from Postsecondary Institutions

Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary defines *accessible* as “capable of being reached.” Disability support services offices exist on postsecondary campuses for that reason – to ensure equal access to programs and activities. **The effort to achieve success must come from the student.**

What Disability Support Services Offices Do

- Empower students to be independent
- Assure that the appropriate academic adjustments/auxiliary aids provided for students who register with the disability support services office.
- Ensure that no student is discriminated against by the institution on the basis of disability
- Ensure that other campus offices are prepared to serve students with disabilities
- Protect the student’s right to confidentiality – disability support services offices will not give out specific information about a student’s disability
- Establish clear procedures for documentation of disabilities and arrangement of academic adjustments/auxiliary aids – even if students choose not to access these services

“Students who choose not to access these established channels may be able to negotiate their academic adjustments/auxiliary aids needs on an individual basis, but may not bring a complaint for lack of accommodations if arrangements so negotiated prove to be unsatisfactory.”

Jarrow, Jane E. (1983). Subpart E: The Impact of Section 504 on Postsecondary Education, AHEAD, Columbus, OH