

How will college be different from high school?

There are a number of differences between high school and college. One difference is the legislation that mandates certain rights for people with disabilities. Once in college you must self-identify your disability and self-advocate for accommodations. The number of classes you take, the length and frequency of the classes and the location of the courses is unlike high school. Your interactions with teachers will change; you may not have daily interaction with teachers. Exhibit 1 shows some of the differences.

Exhibit 1 Differences Between High School and College		
Type of Difference	High School	College
Right to an Education	Education is a right and must be provided to you	Students must go through an admissions process and meet certain criteria to be admitted to the college
Laws	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) entitles or guarantees disabilities services and accommodations to students with disabilities	Under The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act you must meet criteria to be eligible for the services and accommodations
Self-identification	The school is responsible for identifying a student's disability	The student is responsible for documenting the disability and requesting services
Accommodations	Your Individualized Education Plan (IEP) states the accommodations that you are entitled to receive. The school must provide the accommodations	You must apply and request accommodations. Once the college approves the accommodations, you must self-advocate with professors and arrange for the services with the Disability Services Office
Support	Teachers and parents help you make decisions and ask for help	You must ask for support and assistance from the Disability Services Office
Access to Records and Grades	Until you are 18, your parents can access your school grades and participate in IEP meetings	Your parents can not access your school records or grades without your written permission
Classes Meeting Times	Classes meet every day and are between 45 minutes and 90 minutes long	Classes may meet 1, 2, 3 or 4 times a week and classes are generally from 50 minutes to three hours long
Class Location	Classes usually meet in one or two buildings	Classes meet in many different buildings
Contact with Teachers	You usually see your teachers every day	You will see the teachers only on the days you have classes. If you want to see them any other time, you need to make an appointment
Class Size	About 25-30 students are in each class	The number of students in the class can range from 30-300 or more students

Assignments	Teachers will take time to remind you of assignments and due dates	Professors will expect you to check the course outline (or syllabus) for the assignments, grading criteria, and assignment due dates
Costs	If you attend a public school, it is free	The student is responsible for paying the tuition to attend the college and for applying for financial aid

From the HEATH Resource Center Online Clearinghouse on Postsecondary Education for Individuals with Disabilities www.heath.gwu.edu