

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: THE TRANSITION FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Students with disabilities transitioning from high school to higher education can expect to see many differences in how services and support are provided. This includes applicable laws, what the student's responsibilities are, accessing support and accommodations, and classroom and instructor expectations.

To support the transition to higher education, the information below outlines key differences in specific areas .

Applicable Laws

| High School | Higher Education |
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| IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) | ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990) |
| Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973 | Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973 |
| IDEA is about SUCCESS | ADA is about ACCESS |

Student Responsibilities and Self-Advocacy

| High School | Higher Education |
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| Student is identified by the school and is supported by parents/legal guardians and teachers. | Student must self-identify to the Accessibility Services Office. |
| Primary responsibility for arranging accommodations belongs to the school. | The student is responsible for initiating the request for accommodations through the Disability Accommodations Request process and for advocating for themselves. |
| Teachers approach the student if they believe you need assistance. | The student is primarily responsible for initiating outreach if assistance is needed. |

Parental/Legal Guardian Role

| High School | Higher Education |
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| Parent/legal guardian advocates for student. | It is important for student to be primary self-advocate. |
| Parent/legal guardian talks with teachers/counselors when there is an academic issue. | Student talks with instructor or academic advisor when there is an academic issue. |

Required Documentation

| High School | Higher Education |
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| Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and/or 504 Plan | Documentation guidelines specify the information needed in supporting documentation. (High school IEP and 504 Plan alone are typically not sufficient.) |
| Generally, school provides evaluation. | Student must get evaluation at own expense, if one is needed. |
| Documentation focuses on determining whether the student is eligible for services based on specific disability categories in IDEA. | Information on specific functional limitations and demonstrated need for specific reasonable accommodations in higher education must be included in supporting documentation. |

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Instruction

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| Teachers may modify curriculum and/or alter curriculum pace of assignments. | Reasonable accommodations are identified to support the functional limitations indicated in the appropriate supporting documentation. (Instruction modifications and altering of assignment deadlines are not required accommodations.) |
| You are expected to read short readings that are then discussed and often re-taught in class. | All assigned reading and writing work may not be directly addressed in class. |
| You often may not need to read assignments more than once; sometimes listening in class is enough. | It is important to review class notes, text, and other materials regularly. |

Grades and Tests

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| IEP or 504 Plan may include modifications to test format and/or grading. | Accommodations to HOW tests are given (such as, extended time) are available when supported by the appropriate documentation. <i>Grading and test format changes are generally not reasonable accommodations.</i> |
| Testing may be frequent and cover small amounts of material. | Testing may be infrequent and/or cumulative, covering large amounts of material. |
| Teachers often take time to remind you of assignments and due dates. | A course syllabus explains exactly what is expected of a student, when assignments are due, and how a student is graded. Students are expected to read and save the syllabus and refer to it regularly throughout the semester. |

Studying and Academic Preparation

| High School | Higher Education |
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| Tutoring and student support may be a service provided as part of an IEP or 504 Plan. | Students with disabilities seek tutoring and other academic resources available to all students. |
| A student's time and assignments are structured by others. | The student manages their time and completion of assignments. |
| Preparation outside of class may be minimal. | The rule of thumb is 10—12 hours of studying outside of class for each course on a weekly basis. |
| For some students, studying may only occur when there is an exam. | Studying course materials should be an on-going process with or without an upcoming exam. |