



Disability Support Services (DSS)

High School to College Transition

This chart shows the differences in responsibilities a student with a disability has in high school versus in a college environment. The most significant change for students transitioning to college is they are **required by law to present to the office of Disability Services and disclose their learning needs and request accommodations.** IEPs and 504 are no longer valid in college. In college, students receive an accommodation letter once they declare their disability with the Disability Services Office and follow college procedures for requesting and receiving accommodations.

	High School	College
Primary legislation	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. High schools are responsible for identifying and meeting the unique needs of the child with a disability.	Sections 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act. Students must present to the Office of Disability Services and request accommodations.
Disability defined	IDEA provides a list of disabilities and includes specific learning disability.	A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities
Advocacy	The parent or guardian is the primary advocate. Students learn about their disability, the accommodations they need, and ways to become a self-advocate.	Students are expected to be their own advocates.
Assessment	School conducts assessment and provides student with documentation of disability.	Student must provide current documentation of disability by a qualified professional.
Services and meetings	School initiates services and sets up meetings for student (e.g., IEP, 504).	Student initiates requests for services, accommodations and meetings with college faculty and staff.
Mandated services	School districts must provide rehabilitation counseling, medical services, personal aides, social work and other services as needed in the school day.	College provides physical, academic and program access. Related services of a personal nature (e.g., personal aide, long term counseling) are the responsibility of the individual or family.

	High School	College
Educational goals	School often created and monitors progress for student.	Student develops and monitors own progress.
Course workload and curriculum requirements	May be modified.	Is not modified.
Homework	May consist of one to three hours of study time per day, some of it done in class.	Student can expect to study three to four times the number of hours spent in class per week (e.g., 3 credit class requires 9 – 12 hours of homework study time outside of class time).
Reading	Requirements for classes may be done with minimal outside work.	The college is a reading-intensive environment – analytical skills are required.
Privacy and the student	Parents, teachers, and counselors are informed of the student's diagnosis, learning needs, accommodations, and academic progress.	Student's personal information is privileged and is not shared outside the office of Disability Support Services. Only accommodation is information is shared with instructors.

Resources:

[A Comparison of ADA, IDEA, and Section 504](#)

Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund (DREDF)

[Transition of Students With Disabilities To Postsecondary Education: A Guide for High School Educators](#)

U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR)