

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE

An important issue for potential and current college students with disabilities is to understand the differences between disability rights laws in high school and college. In college, more responsibility is placed on the student.

HIGH SCHOOL

Applicable Laws

- IDEA
- Section 504

Required Documentation

- IEP or 504 Plan
- The school provides evaluation at no cost to the student.
- The school conducts evaluations at prescribed intervals.

The Student's Role

- The student is identified and supported by parents and teachers.
- The primary responsibility for accommodations belongs to the school.
- The decision to receive accommodations is made by educators and parents – the student has little input.

The Parent's Role

- The parent has access to the student's records and participates in the accommodation process.
- The parent advocates for the student.

The Teacher/Instructor's Role

- Many modify and/or alter the pace of assignments.
- Teachers use multi-sensory approach.
- Weekly testing, mid-term, final and graded assignments.
- Attendance taken and reported.

COLLEGE

Applicable Laws

- ADA
- Section 504

Required Documentation

- Varies depending on the disability.
- IEP and 504 plans are not sufficient – documentation must include the testing on which the accommodations are based.
- Students must be evaluated at their own expense.

The Student's Role

- The student must self-identify and request services from Disability Support Services.
- The student must provide recent documentation of disability.
- Documentation must clearly support requested accommodations.
- The student is primarily responsible for accommodations.

The Parent's Role

- The parent does not have access to student records unless the student provides written consent.
- The student advocates for self.

The Teacher/Instructor's Role

- College instructors are NOT required to modify the curriculum.
- Instructors rely on lectures and may not use multi-sensory approach.
- Testing and assignments vary – some classes require only a mid-term and final exam.
- Attendance policy is set by the instructor.

