Differences between High School and College for Students with Disabilities

| High School | College |
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| Applicable Laws |
| 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 ensures success; students entitled to services | ADA ensures equal access; protects from discrimination |
| Required Documentation |
| IEP (Individualized Education Plan) and/or 504 Plan | Documentation guidelines specify information needed for each category (IEP/504 Plan alone is insufficient) |
| School provides evaluation at no cost to student | Student must obtain evaluation at own expense |
| School retests over time | Additional accommodations and/or a change in the impact of the disability may warrant additional documentation |
| Self-Advocacy |
| Student is identified by the school and is supported by parents and teachers | Student must self-identify to the Support Services department |
| Primary responsibility for arranging accommodations belongs to the school | Primary responsibility for self-advocacy and requesting accommodations belongs to the student |
| Teachers approach the student if they believe assistance is needed | Professors are usually open and helpful, but most expect students to initiate contact if assistance is needed |
| Parental Role |
| Parent has access to student records and can participate in the accommodations process | Parent does not have access to student records without student’s written consent |
| Parent advocates for student | Student advocates for self |
| Disability Service Provider Role |
| School seeks out students and reminds/creates/coordinates additional resources as needed | Support Services determines eligibility for reasonable accommodations under the ADA and Section 504 upon request from student |
| Primary responsibility for accommodations belongs to the school | Support Services does not duplicate resources found elsewhere on campus; refers students to resources as students identify potential need |
| Instructors |
| Teachers may modify curriculum and/or alter curriculum pace of assignments | Instructors are not required to modify design or alter assignment deadlines |
| Teachers prompt students about grades assignments, and due dates | Student must monitor own progress and manage their time |
| Student is expected to complete assignments that are then discussed and often re-taught in class | Student is responsible for substantial amounts of homework which may not be directly addressed in class |
| Attendance is legally mandated | Attendance is the student’s responsibility; student accepts consequences of non-attendance |
| Tests and Grades |
| IEP or 504 plan may include modifications to test format and/or grading | Grading and test format changes (i.e. multiple choice vs. essay) may not available; accommodations on HOW tests are given (extended time, test proctors) are available when supported by disability documentation |
| Teachers often take time to remind students of assignments and due dates | Instructors expect students to read, save, and consult the course syllabus, which spells out exactly what is expected, when things are due, and how the student will be graded |