

## ***How Is College Different from High School?***

### **Welcome to Mitchell Community College!**

For a successful transition to learning in college, please consider the following points. For more information, contact your advisor or visit your instructor during his or her office hour. We hope that you have a great year!

<b>Personal Freedom in High School</b>	<b>Personal Freedom in College</b>
High school is mandatory and free (unless you choose other options).	College is voluntary and expensive.
Your time is usually structured by others.	You manage your own time.
You need permission to participate in extracurricular activities.	You must decide whether to participate in extracurricular activities.
You need money for special purchases or events.	You need money to meet basic necessities.
You can count on parents and teachers to remind you of your responsibilities and to guide you in setting priorities.	You may face a number of new ethical decisions that you have not had to face previously. <u>You must balance your responsibilities and set priorities.</u>
<b>Guiding principle: You will usually be told what your responsibilities are and corrected if your behavior is out of line.</b>	<b>Guiding principle: <u>You're expected to take responsibility for what you do and don't do, as well as for the consequences of your decisions.</u></b>
<b>High School Classes</b>	<b>College Classes</b>
Each day you proceed from one class directly to another.	You often have hours between classes; class times vary throughout the day, evening, weekend, and online.
You spend 6 hours each day—30 hours a week—in class.	You spend 12 to 16 hours each week in class.
The school year is 36 weeks long; some classes extend over both semesters and some do not.	The academic year is divided into two separate 15-week semesters, plus a week after each semester for exams.
Most of your classes are arranged for you.	You arrange your own schedule in consultation with your academic advisor. Schedules tend to look lighter than they really are.
Teachers carefully monitor class attendance.	As in high school, community college teachers are required to record class attendance.
You are provided with textbooks at little or no expense.	You need to budget substantial funds for textbooks, which will usually cost more than \$200 each semester. (Early College students get free books.)
<b>Guiding principle: You are not responsible for knowing what it takes to graduate.</b>	<b>Guiding principle: Graduation requirements are complex, and differ for different majors and sometimes different years. <u>You are expected to know those that apply to you.</u></b>

High School Teachers	College Professors
Teachers check your completed homework.	Professors may not always check homework, but they will assume you can perform the same tasks on tests.
Teachers remind you of your incomplete work.	Professors will not remind you of incomplete work.
Teachers approach you if they believe you need assistance.	Professors are usually open and helpful, but most expect you to initiate contact if you need help.
Teachers are often available for conversation before, during, or after class.	Professors expect and encourage you to visit them during their scheduled office hours.
Teachers provide you with information you missed when you were absent.	Professors expect you to get any notes from a classmate if you miss class.
Teachers present material to help you understand the material in the textbook.	Professors may not follow the textbook. Instead, to amplify the text, they may give illustrations, provide background information, or discuss research about the topic. They <u>expect you to relate the classes to the textbook readings yourself</u> .
Teachers often write information on the board to be copied in your notes.	Professors may lecture nonstop, expecting you to identify the important points in your notes. When professors write on the board, it may be to amplify the lecture, not to summarize it. Good note-taking techniques are a must.
Teachers impart knowledge and facts, sometimes drawing direct connections and leading you through the thinking process.	Professors expect you to think about and synthesize seemingly unrelated topics.
Teachers often take time to remind you of assignments and due dates.	Professors expect you to read, save, and consult the course syllabus (outline); the syllabus explains exactly what is expected of you, when it is due, and how you will be graded.
<b>Guiding principle: High school is a teaching environment in which you acquire facts and skills.</b>	<b>Guiding principle: College is a learning environment in which <u>you take responsibility for thinking through and applying what you have learned</u>.</b>
Studying in High School	Studying in College
You may study outside of class as little as 2 hours a week, which may include last-minute test prep.	You need to study at least 2 to 3 hours outside of class <u>for each hour in class</u> .
You often need to read or hear presentations only once to learn all you need to learn about them.	You need to review class notes and text material regularly.
You are expected to read short assignments that are then discussed, and often re-taught, in class.	You are assigned substantial amounts of reading and writing <u>which may not be directly addressed in class</u> .
<b>Guiding principle: You will usually be told in class what you need to learn from assigned readings.</b>	<b>Guiding principle: <u>It's up to you to read and understand the assigned material</u>; lectures and assignments proceed from the assumption that you've already done so.</b>

Tests in High School	Tests in College
Testing is frequent and covers small amounts of material.	Testing is usually infrequent and may be cumulative, covering large amounts of material. You, not the professor, need to organize the material to prepare for tests, which may be only 2 or 3 tests total per semester.
Makeup tests are often available.	Makeup tests are seldom an option; <u>if</u> they are, you need to request them.
Teachers frequently rearrange test dates to avoid conflict with school events.	Professors in different courses usually schedule tests without regard to the demands of other courses or outside activities.
Teachers frequently conduct review sessions, pointing out the most important concepts.	Professors rarely offer review sessions, and when they do, they expect you to be an active participant, one who comes prepared with questions.
<b>Guiding principle: Mastery is usually seen as the ability to reproduce what you were taught in the form in which it was presented to you, or to solve the kinds of problems you were shown how to solve.</b>	<b>Guiding principle: Mastery is usually seen as the <u>ability to apply what you've learned to new situations or to solve new kinds of problems.</u></b>
Grades in High School	Grades in College
Grades are given for most assigned work.	Grades may not be provided for all assigned work.
Consistently good homework grades may help raise your overall grade when test grades are low.	Grades on tests and major papers usually provide most of the course grade.
Extra credit projects are often available to help you raise your grade.	Extra credit projects are rarely offered, and cannot, generally speaking, be used to raise a grade in a college course.
Initial test grades, especially when they are low, may not have an adverse effect on your final grade.	Watch out for your first tests. These are usually “wake-up calls” to let you know what is expected—but they also may account for a substantial part of your course grade. <u>You may be shocked when you get your grade.</u>
You may graduate as long as you have passed all required courses with a grade of “D” or higher.	You may graduate <u>only if your overall grade point average (GPA) is at least a 2.0</u> (a “C”). Note that most universities require you to have at least a 2.5 GPA for transfer to the senior institution.
<b>Guiding principle: “Effort counts.” Courses are usually structured to reward a “good-faith effort.”</b>	<b>Guiding principle: “<u>Results count.</u>” Though “good-faith effort” is important in regard to the professor’s willingness to help you achieve good results, <u>it will not substitute for results in the grading process.</u></b>

Adapted from <http://smu.edu/alec/transition.asp>