

Differences Between High School and College

This information is adapted from the 2010 AHEAD Guidelines ("Differences between High School and College for Students with Disabilities") and the [U.S. Department of Education](#).

Area	High School	College
Applicable Laws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 <p>Note: The IDEA is about success.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 <p>Note: The ADA is about access.</p>
Required Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IEP (Individualized Education Plan) and/or 504 Accommodation Plan The school provides evaluations at predetermined intervals at no cost to the student. Documentation focuses on determining whether a student is eligible for services based on specific disability categories in IDEA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IEPs, 504 plans, evaluations, or a letter or form completed by a provider are acceptable documentation at RRCC. New evaluations are the responsibility of the student and are completed at their own expense. Documentation must provide information on the specific nature of the condition or disability as well as functional limitations. It should also demonstrate the need for specific accommodations.
Identification of Disability/ Self-Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The student is identified by the school and supported by caregivers and teachers. The primary responsibility for arranging accommodations belongs to the school. Teachers approach the student if they believe assistance is needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students must self-identify to their college's disability services office. The primary responsibility for self-advocacy and arranging accommodations belongs to the student. Faculty are usually open and helpful, but most expect the student to initiate contact if the student needs support.
Caregiver/ Parental Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The caregiver has access to student records and can participate in the accommodation process. The caregiver advocates for the student. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The caregiver does not have access to their student's records without the student's written consent (FERPA). The student must self-advocate.
Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers may modify the curriculum and/or alter the pace of assignments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty are not required to modify curriculum design or alter assignment deadlines unless an accommodation has been established.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are expected to read short assignments that are then discussed, and often retaught, in class. • Students rarely need to read anything more than once, and sometimes listening in class is enough. • Tasks are more structured and step-by-step instructions are given. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruction tends to be lecture style and some courses may require labs. • Students are assigned substantial amounts of reading and writing that may not be directly addressed in class. • Students need to review class notes and text material regularly. • Tasks are less structured and students are responsible for developing a method to complete tasks. • Absences are limited to a specific number of sessions or hours.
<p>Grades and Tests</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IEP or 504 plan may include modifications to test format and/or grading. • Testing is frequent and covers small amounts of material. • Makeup tests are often available. Teachers often take time to remind the student of assignments and due dates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grading and test format changes (i.e., multiple choice vs. essay) are generally not available. How tests are given (i.e., extended time, test setting) may be considered an appropriate academic adjustment when supported by disability documentation. • Testing is usually infrequent and may be cumulative, covering large amounts of material. • Makeup tests are rarely an option without permission from faculty. • Faculty expect the student to read, save, and consult the course syllabus. A syllabus explains what is expected of the student (i.e., due dates, how work is graded).
<p>Study Responsibilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutoring and study support may be a service provided in an IEP or 504 plan. • The student's time and assignments are structured by others. • Students may study outside of class for short amounts of time, and this may be last-minute test preparation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutoring does not fall under disability services and is not considered an academic adjustment or accommodation. • Students manage their own time and complete assignments independently. • Students may need to study at least 2-3 hours outside of class for each hour in class.