

## HOW DISABILITY SERVICES DIFFER BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

In transitioning from high school to college, many parents are surprised to learn that colleges have different requirements than high schools when it comes to providing services to students with disabilities. Learning the specific differences can help prepare you and your student for what to expect.

<p>Colleges are <b>REQUIRED</b> to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make all college programs and services academically and physically accessible.</li> <li>• Provide auxiliary aids, equipment and other reasonable resources so that disabled students have equal access.</li> <li>• Provide reasonable accommodations so that students have the opportunity to equally participate in classes and activities.</li> </ul>	<p>Colleges are <b>NOT REQUIRED</b> to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide specific aids or accommodations if an equal aid or accommodation will meet the need.</li> <li>• Provide accommodations that fundamentally alter, lower or substantially modify essential requirements of the course or program.</li> <li>• Lower admission criteria or programmatic essential elements.</li> <li>• Provide diagnostic assessments/Individualized Education Plans (IEP), personally prescribed devices, personal transportation or mobility devices, personal assistants/aids or private tutoring.</li> <li>• Follow the requirements of an IEP.</li> </ul>
APPLICABLE LAWS	
High School	College
The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is about student success.	The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is about student access.
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Subpart D.	Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Subpart E.
PARENT'S ROLE	
High School	College
FERPA allows parents to have full access to their student's education record.	The FERPA regulations state that in higher education the student owns their education record and experience. Students can choose to provide authorization for their college to disclose portions their academic record, but the authorization is limited to releasing records only and does not allow a parent or third party to act on their behalf or participate in college processes in their stead.
Parents participate in the IEP or 504 plan meetings.	Parents cannot represent the student or take any action on their behalf. Any conversation or communication regarding the student must include the student.
Teachers discuss progress reports and grades with parents.	Faculty will not communicate with parents. All information about learning, instruction and grades should come from and will be communicated with, the student.
SELF-ADVOCACY	
High School	College
Parents are expected to advocate for their student.	Students are expected to self-advocate by understanding their disability and their needs.
Teachers monitor the student's progress and intervene if they believe the student needs assistance.	Faculty are helpful, but students are responsible for initiating contact if assistance is needed.

OBTAINING SERVICES	
High School	College
Students are identified by parents and teachers.	Students must self-identify to the Student Disability Services office.
Specific services are outlined in an IEP or 504 plan.	Students must request specific accommodations and provide supporting evidence through documentation.
DOCUMENTATION	
High School	College
Documentation focuses on determining whether student qualifies for services based on specific disability categories in IDEA.	Colleges have specific documentation requirements. Minimally, it must be from a qualified medical provider, typed on letterhead and appropriately signed. The documentation must provide information on diagnosis, functional limitations and demonstrate a need for specific accommodations.
IEP and 504 plans may be renewed and continue through high school.	An IEP alone is typically not sufficient; however, it can be submitted as documentation to inform and determine reasonable accommodations. Colleges are not obligated to follow the requirements of an IEP plan.
ACCOMMODATIONS	
High School	College
Modifications are provided through an IEP, 504 plan and individualized instruction.	Reasonable accommodations are provided to ensure equal access and participation.
Modifications that alter curriculum or change course outcomes are permitted through an IEP.	Colleges cannot offer accommodations that fundamentally alter, lower or substantially modify essential requirements of the course or program. Students are responsible for meeting any programmatic essential elements.
Modifications are broadly defined and typically allow for any type of adjustments to be implemented.	Accommodations are determined on a case-by case basis in conjunction with supporting documentation.
COURSES AND INSTRUCTION	
High School	College
Teachers have full access to a student's IEP or 504 plan and are included in meetings about the student's progress under the plan.	Faculty receive a brief letter verifying a student's approved accommodations. They do not receive information about a student's specific disability or diagnosis unless it is necessary to facilitate the accommodation.
Teachers work with students on due dates.	Students are responsible for knowing when their deliverables are due. Faculty are not permitted to provide accommodations outside of what is approved by the Student Disability Services (SDS) office.
Teachers may provide extra credit.	There are no opportunities for extra credit.
Teachers may allow test retakes for a higher grade.	Exam retakes are seldom an option and are offered under extenuating circumstances, not as an accommodation.
Teachers present information during class to walk students through their textbook and study materials.	Professors have lectures and supplemental materials to enhance the textbook and course materials which are expected to be read/ reviewed prior to class.
Individual tutoring and study services may be provided as part of an IEP or 504 plan.	Studying and tutoring are not accommodations. Students may utilize campus tutoring services on their own time based on availability.

**LEARN MORE AND CONNECT** | [gcu.edu/SDS](https://gcu.edu/SDS) | [DisabilityOffice@gcu.edu](mailto:DisabilityOffice@gcu.edu) | **602-639-6342**

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