Differences Between High School and College-level Disability Services

Issue	*High School*	*College*
Eligibility Determination	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973	Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act: ADA; American with Disabilities Act Amendment Act of 2008; ADAAA IDEA no longer applies at college level.
Basis for Accommodation Plans	IEP's or 504 Plans; School provides evaluations at no cost to students. School conducts evaluations at prescribed intervals.	Varies depending on the disability; high school I.E.P. and 504 plans are not sufficient; must include the testing on which the accommodations are based. Students must get evaluation at their own expense and students must provide documentation that is current.
Identification of Disability	Students are identified by the school and are supported by parents and teachers.	Students must self-identify to the office responsible for Disability Services. Primary responsibility for self advocacy and arranging accommodations belongs to the student.
Forms of Instruction	Individually designed instruction is possible. Focus is on accommodations which foster student success in the classroom.	Professors are not required to modify curriculum design. Tends to be lecture style, may or may not use multi-sensory approach; labs required for some courses. Testing and assignment frequency varies. Attendance is taken and absences are limited to a specific number of hours; if you exceed this number of hours, you may receive a lower grade.
Grades and Testing	Grades may be modified based on curriculum.	Grades reflect the quality of work submitted; students must request testing accommodations well before the test.

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Coordination of accommodations	Teachers and administrators.	Students are responsible for disclosing and coordinating accommodations with instructions. Primary responsibility for self advocacy and arranging accommodations belongs to the student.
Accommodations Arrangements	Primary responsibility for arranging accommodations belongs to the school.	Once approved, the student must request his or her accommodations in each instance that they are needed. For example, for testing accommodations, the student must provide the appropriate office with the dates and times of his or her exams and may be required to have more participation in the arrangements for such accommodation.
Advocating for student	Usually done by parents.	Communication is the responsibility of the student. Students should communicate with DASS, parents, and instructors. Release of information form is required for DASS to speak to parents.
Progress toward goals	Monitored by teachers and administration; communicated to students and parents.	Students advocate for self and monitor their own progress. A college may not, by law, contact parents about a student's academic performance unless the student gives the college permission to do so. Parents wishing to know how their student is doing should ask the student directly.

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Accommodation Objectives	Accommodations and services are usually designed to maximize a student's potential.	Accommodations are granted to create a 'level playing field,' rather than to help a student reach his or her greatest potential. Often, certain accommodation requests are rejected on the basis that they go beyond the scope of this goal.
Conduct	Disruptive conduct may be accepted.	Disruptive behavior and inability to abide by the institution's code of conduct are deemed "not qualified" and can be grounds for dismissal.
Transporation	School provides transportation at no cost.	Students must arrange transportation, both to and from the campus as well as around campus.
Most Important Differences	IDEA is about Success. High School is mandatory and free.	ADA is about Equal Access. Postsecondary is voluntary and the student is responsible for the cost.

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