

Differences Between High School and College

Laws and Responsibilities

High School	College
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Americans with Disabilities Act (Amendments Act) (ADA-AA)	Sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (Amendments Act) (ADA-AA)
A team creates, implements modifications or accommodations, and assesses the effectiveness of the IEP or 504 with input from the student and their caregiver. The team arranges for accommodations, resource connection, and initiates renewal of the support plan annually.	The student must initiate the request for accommodations, and participate in the eligibility process. The student is responsible for requesting accommodations each semester, sending accommodations letters to instructors, and proactively requesting use of their accommodations.
Specially designed instruction, accommodations and course modifications are provided through an IEP, and accommodations only are provided through a 504. There is flexibility with content and due dates built into the structure of high school, given the frequency and duration of time spent in school. Both kinds of district-monitored plans expire upon graduation in most cases. Accommodations received in high school are not automatically approved for use in college.	Students who enroll in a college/university must determine if they are otherwise qualified to meet the requirements outlined by the institution. Essential elements of the degree program and course requirements cannot be modified due to a disability. The student may only use the accommodations approved by DAI, which may differ from accommodations recommendations in a high school plan or evaluation documentation.

Classes

High School	College
The school sets schedule and attendance policies, though there may be some flexibility with either, if the student is on an IEP or a 504 plan. Classes in high school are smaller, more frequent, and there may be more “busy work” during class time. Homework expectations, and the length or complexity of assignments can be modified per a student’s plan. Some students may be given broad accommodations that provide extensions on submitting all academic work. This is an accommodation that does not address developing the underlying executive functioning skill sets that a student may need to to complete and submit work on time.	Students manage their own time and schedule, and are expected to follow URI’s academic policies. Classes can be large or small, and meet less frequently. Students are expected to do more assignment work (reading, writing) outside of class time. Since college courses are sequential, each class builds upon the lessons, lectures or assignments from the previous class. This is why assignment extensions are rarely approved as broad accommodations. URI has excellent resources for the development of executive functioning skills through the UCS 160 course, and the Academic Enhancement Center.
Attendance, comprehension, delivery of class support services, and progress towards graduation are carefully monitored by high school staff.	Attendance policies may vary, and while advisors are available to guide students, it is the responsibility of the student to monitor their progress towards graduation.

Instructors

High School	College
Teachers track class and homework assignments, and provide feedback in a timely manner for the purpose of skill or content development.	Professors will likely not remind students of missing work or grade homework. Grades may not be available to students immediately after submission.
Teachers are trained in multiple methods of instruction, guiding students through the learning process in a more individualized way, so that students develop self-awareness, independence, and an understanding of who they are as learners.	Professors are content area experts, and may not have an education/teaching background. Students are expected to adapt their learning style to the instruction provided, and to independently make connections within the course content.

Studying

High School	College
Study and assignment completion time outside of class is variable, and most homework or long-term assignment content is reviewed repeatedly, and comprehensively during class time.	Extensive assignment completion time is expected outside of class, typically around 2-3 hours for every one hour spent in class. Much of the assignment information will NOT be reviewed in class.
Much of the day is structured, sometimes with opportunities to study, or to get assignment/skill development/content comprehension support built into a student's daily schedule.	Much of the day is unstructured. Students are expected to build their own schedule, including classes, study time, and accessing campus resources like the Academic Enhancement Center, or Counseling Center.

Exams and Quizzes

High School	College
Frequent tests that cover small amounts of material. The material is often reviewed before the test.	Infrequent exams that cover comprehensive amounts of material. The professor does not always review material before the exam.
Teachers schedule test dates around other exams or school events to prevent conflicts. Tests can be moved to other days/times without much difficulty. The student can take exams in a variety of spaces, and may be given varying amounts of extra time to complete the quiz or exam.	Exams are scheduled at the start of the semester without regard for other courses or campus events. Exam dates are posted on the syllabus and/or Brightspace. Students with DAI approved testing accommodations may take exams in class, or if needed, can book with the Academic Testing Center.

Grades

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Work is graded regularly, and feedback about improvement is provided to the student. Homework grades or extra credit can boost a student's grade average if their test grades are low.	Grades may not be given for all work, and feedback may be limited. The majority of the course grade may consist of tests or larger papers/projects. Extra credit is not usually available to students.
Most students will receive a warning, or opportunity to work with the teacher to improve their grade, if they are in danger of failing the course.	Professors may not provide notifications, or flags on Starfish if the student is in danger of failing. Students are encouraged to check their midterm grades online.
Most graduation requirements can be met with a D or better.	Major course requirements often need to meet departmental standards, which are typically a 2.0 or higher.

Accessing Resources

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Teachers, specialists, and clinicians will work with the student on their individualized goals, as dictated by the student's IEP or 504. These supports are built into the student's daily/weekly schedule.	URI is a resource-rich institution, however, students are expected to initiate contact and request single or ongoing appointments for tutoring, counseling, or meeting with a professor during designated office hours.