



NTACT

National Technical Assistance Center on Transition

Differences Between Secondary and Postsecondary Education

High School	College
Legal Differences	
IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)	ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990)
Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973	Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973
IDEA is about facilitating <i>SUCCESS</i>	ADA is about facilitating <i>ACCESS</i>
Documentation	
IEP and/or Section 504 Plan	Documentation guidelines specify information required for each category of disability
Evaluation provided at the school's expense	Student is responsible for providing necessary documentation (i.e., testing)
Documentation intended to determine eligibility for services based on specific categories in IDEA	Documentation must include information on specific functional limitations and must demonstrate the need for specific accommodations
Self-Advocacy	
Student – identified by the school; supported by parents and teachers	Student must self-identify (disclose) to the office of disability services
School is responsible for arranging accommodations	Student is responsible for self-advocacy; arranging accommodations is the student's responsibility
Teachers may approach the student if they feel they are in need of help	Professors typically wait for the student to initiate contact if help is needed
Parental Role	
Parent has access to the student's records	Student must provide written consent for parent to access student records (due to FERPA)
Attends IEP or Section 504 meetings	Students attend meetings on their own (unless they provide parental consent to attend meetings)



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Parent may advocate for their child	Student must advocate for him- or herself
Instructional Differences	
Teachers may modify curriculum or assignments	Professors are not required to make modifications to curriculum nor to assignments (including deadlines)
Content is supported differently (i.e., material for homework may be discussed in class or re-taught)	Many classes require large amounts of reading and writing which may or may not be reviewed in class
Content material is typically less dense and intense and in-depth review may not be as necessary	Content material is often dense and may require greater review and active reading/note-taking; review is essential
Student Responsibilities	
Tutoring and academic support may be a part of a student's IEP or 504 plan	Tutoring and academic support are not a part of the office of disability services; students must use the tutoring/academic support services offered to all students
The student's time is structured by others (i.e., in school 8 hours a day)	The student structures his or her own time and must complete assignments independently (i.e., no progress checks)
Study time outside of class may be minimal	An average of 2-3 hours per credit hour is usually required in college-level classes (i.e., a 3 credit class requires between 8-10 additional hours)

Assembled for NTACT by Debbie Holzberg, PhD (2017)