

General Differences Between High School and College

CLASSES

	HIGH SCHOOL	POSTSECONDARY
1	Usually follow a school-directed schedule and proceed from one class to another.	Individual students must manage their own time and schedules.
2	General education classes dictated by state/district requirements.	Class based on field of study; requirements may vary.
3	Typically a school year is 36 weeks long; some classes extend over both semesters. Summer classes may be offered but are not used to accelerate graduation.	Academic year is divided into two separate 15-week semesters plus a week for final exams. (Hint: Some institutions are on a trimester schedule.) Courses are offered fall, spring, and summer semesters, and summer classes may be used to accelerate graduation.
4	Class attendance is usually mandatory and monitored carefully.	Attendance policies may vary with each instructor. (Hint: Lack of attendance may impact performance.)
5	Classes generally have no more than 30-35 students.	Classes may have 100 or more students.
6	Textbooks are typically provided at little or no expense.	Textbooks can be expensive. (Hint: An anticipated range for a full-time student is \$200-\$400 per semester.)
7	Guidance is provided for students so that they will be aware of graduation requirements.	Graduation requirements are complex and vary for different fields of study. (Note: You are responsible for monitoring your progress and seeking advice.)
8	Modifications that change course outcomes may be offered based on the student's IEP.	Modifications that change course outcomes will not be offered. (Hint: Modified high school courses may not be accepted in the admission process.)

INSTRUCTORS

	HIGH SCHOOL	POSTSECONDARY
1	Grade and check completed homework.	Assume homework is completed and students are able to perform on a test.

STUDYING

	HIGH SCHOOL	POSTSECONDARY
1	Study time outside of class may vary (maybe as little as 1-3 hours per week per class).	Generally need to study at least 2-3 hours outside of class for each hour in class.
2	Instructors may review class notes and text material regularly for classes.	Review class notes and text material regularly. (Hint: use the time between classes carefully.)
3	Expected to read short assignments that are discussed and retaught.	Substantial amounts of assigned reading and writing may not be directly addressed in class. (Hint: It's up to you to read and understand assigned material or access support.)

TESTING

	HIGH SCHOOL	POSTSECONDARY
1	Frequent, covering small amounts of material.	Usually infrequent (2-3 times a semester). Maybe cumulative and cover large amounts of material. (Hint: You need to organize material to prepare for tests.) Some classes may require only papers and/or projects instead of tests.
2	Make-up tests are often available.	Make-up tests are seldom an option and may have to be requested.
3	Test dates can be arranged to avoid conflicts with other events.	Usually, scheduled tests are without regard to other demands.
4	Frequently conducts review sessions emphasizing important concepts prior to tests.	Faculty rarely offer review sessions; if so students are expected to be prepared and to be active participants.

GRADES

	HIGH SCHOOL	POSTSECONDARY
1	Given for most assigned work.	May not be provided for all assigned work.
2	Good homework grades may assist in raising over grade when test grades are lower.	Tests and major papers provide the majority of the grade.
3	Extra credit options are often available.	Generally speaking, extra-credit options are not used to raise a grade.
4	Initial test grades, especially when low, may not have adverse effect on grade.	First tests are often "wake up" calls to let you know what is expected. (Hint: Watch out! They may account for a substantial part of your final grade. Contact instructor, academic advisor, or student accessibility personnel if you do poorly.)

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LAWS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

	HIGH SCHOOL	POSTSECONDARY
1	Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).	Section 504 and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
2	Covers ages 3-21 or until regular high school diploma requirements are met.	Covers students with disabilities regardless of age; schools may not discriminate in recruitment, admission, or after admission solely on the basis of a disability.
3	Free, appropriate public education is mandatory.	Students decide to attend and will probably pay tuition.
4	Districts are required to identify students with disabilities through free evaluation and the individualized education program (IEP) process.	Student is responsible for revealing and providing current documentation of a disability. They must self advocate.
5	Students receive special education services to address needs based on an identified disability.	Formal special education services are not available.
6	Services may include specially designed instruction, modifications, and accommodations based on the IEP.	Reasonable accommodations and modifications may be made to provide equal access and participation.
7	Individual student needs based on the IEP may be addressed by program support for school personnel.	No formal program support for school personnel is provided.
8	Progress toward IEP goals is monitored and communicated to the parent(s) and the student.	Students are required to monitor their own progress and communicate their needs to instructors.
9	Schools assist in connecting the student with community support agencies if identified as a transition need according to the IEP.	Students are responsible for making their own connections with community support agencies.

OTHER FACTORS TO CONSIDER

	HIGH SCHOOL	POSTSECONDARY
1	State and/or district policies may determine eligibility for participation in extracurricular activities.	Postsecondary institution policies may determine eligibility for participation in extracurricular activities.
2	Parents typically manage finances for school-related activities.	Students are responsible for money management of basic needs and extra spending money. (Hint: Outside jobs may be necessary and one more “activity” to consider for time management.)
3	Parents and teachers may provide support and guidance in responsibilities and setting priorities.	Students are responsible for setting their own priorities.