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# Making the transition from High School to College

## An Understanding of the Differences between the Responsibilities of High Schools and Colleges is Critical to Successful Transition.

*Source: This material was adapted from material developed by the NC Association on Higher Education and Disability*

Universities and Colleges in North Carolina are open and accessible to students with disabilities. They are committed to providing assistance to enable qualified students to accomplish their educational goals as well as assuring equal opportunity to derive all of the benefits of campus life. Too often freshmen with disabilities struggle to make a successful transition to college. It's easy to understand why the transition can be so difficult. The laws are different and so is the accommodation process. The North Carolina Association on Higher Education and Disability (NC AHEAD) wants to provide information which may ease the transition and provide a successful beginning to university life.

### **LAWS**

IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are very different. In high schools for example, under IDEA, special education program procedures may apply primarily to Learning Disabilities. High school students who are in wheelchairs, may fall under a subpart of Section 504. IEP's (Individual Education Plans) are developed for these students simply because that is the procedure required under the IDEA mandated program. The misunderstanding comes

from the practice of assuming that the "504 Plan" or the IEP developed at a high school will be binding on a college or university.

### **High School:**

- IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Civil Rights Restoration Act Civil

### **Post-secondary:**

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Civil Rights Restoration Act

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **High School:**

- Identify students with disabilities
- Provide assessment of learning disabilities
- Classify disabilities according to specified diagnostic categories
- Involve parents or guardians in placement decisions
- Provide certain non-academic services
- Place student in programs where they can benefit (in any way) by placement committee with parent participation and approval
- Structure a large part of the student's weekly schedule
- Modify educational programs
- Prepare IEP's
- Provide a free and appropriate education
- Provide appropriate services by the school nurse or health services

### **Post-secondary:**

- Protect a student's right to privacy and confidentiality
- Provide access to programs and services which are offered to persons without disabilities
- Inform students of office location and procedures for requesting accommodations
- Accept and evaluate verifying documentation
- Determine that a mental or physical impairment causes a substantial limitation of a major life activity based on student-provided verifying documents.
- Determine whether a student is otherwise qualified for participation in the program

or service, with or without accommodations, and if so, whether a reasonable accommodation is possible.

- Make reasonable accommodations for students who meet the above qualifying criteria
- Provide reasonable access to program and service choices equal to those available to the general public.
- Inform students of their rights and responsibilities.

### **Universities are NOT required to:**

- Reduce or adjust the essential requirements of a course or program
- Conduct testing and assessment of learning disabilities
- Provide personal attendants
- Provide personal or private tutors
- Prepare IEP's

### **In contrast to the K-12 educational experience where many of the responsibilities are assumed by the School, Student Responsibilities at a University also change. It is the Student's Responsibility to:-**

- Act as an independent adult
- Self-identify or disclose their disability
- Provide verifying documentation
- Obtain assessment and test results and make them available to the university
- Arrange their own weekly schedules
- Contact the Office overseeing accommodations requests
- Arrange for and obtain their own personal tutoring

## **CHECKLIST PRIOR TO ENTERING A UNIVERSITY**

- Identify sources of information - teachers, counselors, peers, websites
- Research services / resources offered by different universities
- Develop a short-list of universities
- Inquire about documentation requirements and 'registration' processes
- Discuss Special Testing Arrangements for the SAT/ACT
- Undertake College/University Visits
- Refine your short-list of universities
- Apply Early
- If accepted, contact the Accessibility / Disability Service Office and Housing Services (if applicable) at the University