



Differences Between High School & College A Guide for Students with Disabilities

Wesleyan College is committed to equal education and full participation for all students. As a student with a disability, it is important to understand that the standards for disability resources and services are different in some respects when progressing to post-secondary education. First, students must understand the difference between the disability laws that apply to elementary and secondary education as compared to those that apply to post-secondary education. Students will have responsibilities as a postsecondary student that they do not have as a high school student. The IDEA is a federal law that governs early intervention, special education and related services for disabled schoolchildren through high school graduation. The IDEA does not apply to post-secondary education. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and certain titles of the Americans with Disabilities Act and its amendments are federal laws that protect individuals from discrimination based on their disability in connection with most colleges and universities. These laws provide that postsecondary students must be granted the opportunity to compete with their non-disabled peers.

A college may not discriminate on the basis of disability. It must insure that the programs it offers are accessible to students with disabilities. However, success in college is up to the student. At the post-secondary level, accommodations are granted to create a “level playing field,” rather than to guarantee a student reach her greatest potential as is the goal in earlier education. At the college level, the student must locate the office of Disability Resources, identify herself to the office, request accommodations, and provide documentation to support the need for accommodations. Colleges and universities are required to provide students with appropriate academic adjustments and auxiliary aids and services that are necessary to afford an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in the school's program. Colleges and universities are not required to supply students with attendants, individually prescribed devices such as hearing aids and wheelchairs, readers for personal use or study, or other devices or services of a personal nature.

A postsecondary student with a disability who is in need of auxiliary aids is obligated to provide notice of the nature of the disabling condition to the college and to assist it in identifying appropriate and effective auxiliary aids. In postsecondary schools, the students themselves must identify the need for an auxiliary aid and give adequate notice of the need. Unlike elementary or secondary schools, colleges may ask the student, in response to a request for auxiliary aids, to provide supporting diagnostic test results and professional prescriptions for auxiliary aids. A college also may obtain its own professional determination of whether specific requested auxiliary aids are necessary.

Although you may request an academic adjustment from Wesleyan College at any time, you should request it as early as possible. Some academic adjustments may take more time to provide than others. You should follow the procedures outlined in the Request for Disability Services Form to ensure that Wesleyan has enough time to review your request and provide an appropriate academic adjustment.

High School

Focuses on ***Success***

College

Focuses on ***Access***

Applicable Laws

- * FAPE – Free Appropriate Public Education
- * IDEA - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- * Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- * ADA - Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
- * ADA Amendments Act of 2008
- * Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Required Documentation

- * IEP - Individual Education Plan and/or 504 Plan and/or Summary Performance
- * School provides evaluation at no cost
- * Documentation focuses on determining whether student is eligible for services based on specific disability categories in IDEA
- * Documentation guidelines specify information needed
- * Student must get evaluation at own expense
- * Eligibility for services is driven by “impact on a major life activity” – student must be able to demonstrate the need for specific accommodations with current documentation

Self Advocacy

- * Student is identified by the school and is supported by parents and teachers
- * Teachers approach you if they believe you need assistance
- * Primary responsibility for arranging accommodations belongs to the school
- * Student must self-identify to Disability Resources in order to receive accommodations
- * Professors are usually open and helpful, but expect students to initiate contact
- * Primary responsibility for self-advocacy and arranging accommodations belongs to the student

Parental Role

- * Parents have access to student records and can participate in the accommodation process
- * Parent often main advocate for student
- * Parents do NOT have access to student records without student's written consent
- * Student advocates for self

Instruction

- * Teachers often modify curriculum and/alter curriculum pace of assignments
- * Students seldom need to read anything more than once, sometimes listening in class is enough
- * Classes meet daily
- * Most work is done in class
- * Students are expected to read short assignments that are then discussed and often re-taught in class
- * Attendance is legally mandated. School, community and the family accept the consequences of non-attendance
- * Professors may not modify, design or alter assignment deadlines
- * Students need to review class notes and text material regularly
- * Classes meet once, twice or three times per week
- * Most work is done outside the class
- * Students are assigned substantial amounts of reading and writing which may not be directly addressed in class
- * Attendance is the student’s responsibility. Student accepts the consequences of non-attendance

Grades and Tests

- * IEP or 504 plans may include modifications to test format and/or grading
- * Testing is frequent and covers small amounts of material
- * Makeup tests are often available
- * Teachers often take time to remind students of assignments and due dates
- * Grading and test format changes are generally not available. A postsecondary institution is not required to lower or substantially modify essential requirements of programs and services
- * Testing is usually infrequent and may be cumulative, covering large amounts of material
- * Makeup tests are seldom an option; if they are, students are responsible for requesting them
- * Professors expect students to read, save, and consult the course syllabus (outline); the syllabus spells out exactly what is expected of you, when it is due, and how you will be graded

Study Responsibilities

- * Tutoring and study support may be a service provided as part of an IEP or 504 plan
- * Students' time and assignments are structured by others
- * Transportation is provided to and from school
- * Students may study outside class as little as 0 to 2 hours a week and this may be mostly last-minute test preparation
- * Students must seek out tutoring and other available academic resources
- * Students are expected to manage their own time and complete assignments independently
- * Transportation must be determined by the student and factored into the class schedule
- * Students usually need to study at least 2 to 3 hours outside of class each week for each hour in class

Helpful General Information

Going to College – A resource for teens with disabilities

<http://www.going-to-college.org>

Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund

<http://dredf.org/advocacy/comparison.html>

Disabilities Opportunities Internetworking and Technology

<http://www.washington.edu/doi/>

