

Differences between High School and College

It is an exciting time- heading to college. You will face many challenges and many opportunities during your post secondary experience. Some of what you encounter will be familiar but much of it will be different. To help you with this, we have outlined a comparison of high school and college.

| | High School | College |
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| Personal Freedom | High school is mandatory and free. | College is voluntary and expensive. |
| | Your time is generally structured by others. | You manage your own time. |
| | You can count on parents and teachers to remind you of your responsibilities and to guide you in setting priorities. | You are considered an adult who is old enough to take responsibility for your actions as well as the consequences of your decisions. |
| | Academic goals are established in collaboration with others. | You establish and attain your own academic and personal goals. |

| | High School | College |
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| Instruction | Teachers: - impart knowledge and facts helping you to draw connections and lead you through the thinking process. | Professors: - expect you to think about and independently synthesize and relate topics. |
| | - present material to help you understand the information in the textbook. | - may not follow the textbook. Instead, may offer background information, illustrations, examples, or case studies that add to the topics. Or, they may expect you to relate the classes to the readings. |
| | - will check your completed homework. | - will not always check homework but will assume that it has been completed and that you can perform the same tasks on tests. |
| | - often write information on the board to be copied in your notes. | - may lecture nonstop - expecting you to identify the important points and make notes. If they use overheads, PowerPoint or write on the board, it will be to supplement the lecture, not to summarize it. |
| | - approach you if they believe you need help. | - will expect that if you require additional help you will make the time to meet with the professor outside of class during posted office hours. |

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| | - remind you of your incomplete work. | - may not remind you of incomplete work. |
| | - will take the time to remind you of assignments and due dates. | - expect you to read, save and consult the course outline and/or website to keep track of assignment deadlines and test dates. |
| | - will know all students in class. | - will not necessarily know all of the students, particularly in the first semester. |
| Structure | Teachers take attendance. | Attendance is part of your course evaluation for some courses. |
| | Assignments are more structured in terms of expected outcomes, process and completion requirements. | Assignments are completed more independently. |
| | More time is spent in class with the teacher directing your learning activities. | Less time is spent in class. You are expected to do more independent learning outside of the class time. |
| | Less homework (1-2 hours a day) | More homework: 2 hours of study for 1 hour of class time. (3-6 hours a day) |
| | Class time is generally 30 hours per week. | Class time is 18 – 21 hours per week. |
| | Classes are scheduled from 9:00 to 3:00 with a lunch break. Each day follows the same schedule. | Classes may be scheduled from 8:30 until 6:30 with intermittent breaks. Class time varies from day to day throughout the week. |
| | Time to complete assignments in class. | Assignments are most often completed outside of class time. |

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| Study Habits | You may be able to get away with very little studying. | You will find it necessary to develop good study habits in order to be successful. |
| | Your studying may be done the night before the test. | Because of the volume of work covered and the increased pace of delivery, it will be important for you to plan to study several days in advance of your test. |
| | You may only have one test a day or a week. | You will often have several tests a week and perhaps more than one per day. |
| | You may be able to study the same way for all subjects. | You will have to develop more than one way to study because of the difference in learning objectives from course to course. |
| Tests | Quizzes and tests may be given weekly usually at the end of chapters. | Generally 1-3 tests per semester, most often at the end of a unit comprised of multiple chapters. |
| | Most test questions are short answer, multiple choice, true and false and/or fill in the blank. | Exam questions are more difficult to predict and involve more explanations and writing. Exams may take on varied formats from essay to web based and hands-on activities. |

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| Grades | Grades are generally based on a number of tests and assignments. | Grades may be based on fewer test scores. Or no test scores but rather on project work, lab work, papers, group work etc. |
| | A passing grade is usually 50%. | A passing grade may be 60%, 70% or higher. |
| | You can fail one course and still proceed to the next year. | Failure in one course may result in you not proceeding in your program. |
| | Your grades are averaged as a final percentage. | Your grades are weighted and averaged as a GPA (Grade Point Average). A 4.0 GPA is the highest possible. Most programs require a GPA of 2.0 to remain in good academic standing. |
| Support Services | You are identified as a student requiring supports and those accommodations are arranged for you. | You self-identify to receive supports and you make the choice when and if to use these accommodations. |
| | Program modifications may be made for you. | All students must meet the program prerequisites for admission and achieve all “core competencies” of their program. Programs are not modified. |
| | Accommodations may vary depending upon your school board and available resources. | Accommodations are unique to each individual and made based on a review of confidential documentation that you provide to the college. |

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| | <p>You may go to a resource room each day for assistance with your coursework.</p> | <p>Most colleges do not have a “resource room”. You are independent and responsible for seeking assistance. You may have access to learning support services such as learning skills advisors and specialized tutoring.</p> |
| | <p>Your IEP is commonly created to outline your learning supports for the entire academic year.</p> | <p>Your accommodations are reviewed each semester and will reflect the new semester requirements.</p> |