Differences Between High School and College

General Differences

In High School	In College
High school is mandatory and usually free.	College is voluntary and can be expensive.
Students' time and schedule is structured in most part by others.	Students manage their own time and register for their own classes.
Students need parent permission to participate in extracurricular activities.	Students must decide whether to participate in co-curricular activities and which fit best with their academic, personal, and other goals.
Students can count on parents and teachers to remind them of your responsibilities and to give regular guidance in setting priorities.	Students must balance their own responsibilities and set priorities. Faculty, advisors, and other staff are available from which to request support and guidance.
Each day high school students typically proceed from one class directly to another, spending 6 hours each day--30 hours a week--in class.	Students in college often have hours between classes; class times vary day-to-day and run throughout the day and evening hours. Students might only spend as little as 12-16 hours per week in class with a majority of the work being done outside of formal instruction.
Most of a student's classes are arranged for them by guidance.	Students arrange their own schedules in consultation with faculty and academic advisors. Schedules tend to look lighter than they really are.
Students are not responsible for knowing what is required to graduate or tracking their own progress.	Students are expected to select their own majors and/or minors and are expected to learn the graduation requirements for their programs of study.
Parents have access to school records, student progress, and other information.	Students are protected under FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act). College staff may not share information without the student's consent.
Guiding principle: Students are usually told what to do and corrected if their behavior is not in line with set expectations.	**Guiding principle: Students are expected to take responsibility for their own path and academic success, as well as the consequences and rewards of their actions.**

Identifying and Disclosing a Disability

In High School	In College
Education is a right and must be provided in appropriate environments to all individuals.	Education is not a right. Students must meet certain admissions criteria and be defined under the ADA as qualified to meet the requirements of an academic program.
School districts are responsible to identify students' disabilities.	Students must self-identify to Disability Services.
School districts must provide free testing, evaluation, and transportation to programs.	Students must provide transportation as well as current and appropriate documentation. If the documentation is insufficient, students may obtain evaluations at their own cost
School districts develop Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).	No IEPs are developed in college, as there is no special education. IEPs from high school do not always apply in college and need not be submitted for services.
School districts are responsible for providing all IEP supports and services.	Students are responsible for activating and using approved services every term.
Fundamental alterations of programs and curricula are required.	No fundamental alterations of program or curricula are required.
Personal services for medical/physical disabilities are required.	No personal services are required.
Guiding Principle: The responsibility of identifying a student's disability and implementing accommodations and curriculum modifications falls on the high school.	**Guiding Principle: The responsibility for identifying, documenting and disclosing a disability falls on the student. The implementation of accommodations is led by the student and facilitated through a team effort involving the student, Disability Services staff, and the student's faculty members**

Disability Resource Center
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Tests

In High School	In College
Testing is frequent and covers small amounts of material.	Testing is usually infrequent and may be cumulative, covering large amounts of material. The student, not the professor, needs to organize the material to prepare for the test. A particular course may have only 2 or 3 tests in a term.
Makeup tests are often available.	Makeup tests are seldom an option; if they are, you need to request them.
Teachers frequently rearrange test dates to avoid conflict with school events.	Professors in different courses usually schedule tests without regard to the demands of other courses or outside activities.
Teachers frequently conduct review sessions, pointing out the most important concepts.	Professors don't always offer review sessions, and when they do, they expect you to be an active participant, one who comes prepared with questions.
Guiding principle: Mastery is usually seen as the ability to reproduce what you were taught in the form in which it was presented to you, or to solve the kinds of problems you were shown how to solve.	**Guiding principle: Mastery is often seen as the ability to apply what you've learned to new situations or to solve new kinds of problems.**

Grades

In High School	In College
Grades are given for most assigned work.	Grades may not be provided for all assigned work.
Consistently good homework grades may raise your overall grade when test grades are low.	Grades on tests and major papers usually provide most of the course grade.
Extra credit projects are often available to help you raise your grade.	Extra credit projects cannot always be used to raise a grade in a college course.
Initial test grades, especially when they are low, may not have an adverse effect on your final grade.	Watch out for your first tests. These are usually "wake-up calls" to let you know what is expected--but they also may account for a substantial part of your course grade. You may be shocked when you get your grades.
You may graduate as long as you have passed all required courses with a grade of D or higher.	You may graduate only if your average in classes meets the departmental standard.
Guiding principle: "Effort counts." Courses are usually structured to reward a "good-faith effort."	**Guiding principle: "Results count." Though "good-faith effort" is important in regard to the professor's willingness to help you achieve good results, it will not substitute for results in the grading process.**

Classes

In High School	In College
The school year is 36 weeks long; some classes extend over both semesters and some don't.	The academic year is divided into four separate 10-week terms (8 weeks in summer), with a week or so off between each term.
Classes generally have no more than 35 students.	Class lectures may number 100 students or more.
Students do most of their studying in class or in study halls and might not take much work home with them from school.	Students do most of their studying outside of class (at least 2 to 3 hours outside of class for each hour in class) with lectures and other class work as a guide.
Students seldom need to read anything more than once, and sometimes listening in class is enough.	Students should review class notes and text material regularly and consult with the professor, other students, teaching assistants and tutoring services often.
Students are provided with textbooks at no expense.	Students need to budget substantial funds for textbooks and class materials.
Students are expected to read short assignments that are then discussed, and often re-taught, in class.	Students are assigned substantial amounts of reading and writing which may not be directly addressed in class.
Guiding principle: Students will usually be told in class what you need to learn from assigned readings and materials and reminded regularly.	**Guiding principle: It's up to the student to read and understand the assigned material; lectures and assignments proceed from the assumption that the student has already done so.**

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Teachers/Professors

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Teachers check your completed homework.	Professors may not always check completed homework, but they will assume you can perform the same tasks on tests.
Teachers remind you of your incomplete work.	Professors may not remind you of incomplete work.
Teachers approach you if they believe you need assistance.	Professors are usually open and helpful, but most expect you to initiate contact if you need assistance.
Teachers are often available for conversation before, during, or after class.	Professors expect and want you to attend their scheduled office hours.
Teachers have been trained in teaching methods to assist in imparting knowledge to students.	Professors have been trained as experts in their particular areas of research.
Teachers provide you with information you missed when you were absent.	Professors expect you to get from classmates any notes from classes you missed.
Teachers present material to help you understand the material in the textbook.	Professors may not follow the textbook. Instead, to amplify the text, they may give illustrations, provide background information, or discuss research about the topic you are studying. Or they may expect you to relate the classes to the textbook readings.
Teachers often write information on the board to be copied in your notes.	Professors may lecture nonstop, expecting you to identify the important points in your notes. When professors write on the board, it may be to amplify the lecture, not to summarize it. Good notes are a must.
Teachers impart knowledge and facts, sometimes drawing direct connections and leading you through the thinking process.	Professors expect you to think about and synthesize seemingly unrelated topics.
Teachers often take time to remind you of assignments and due dates.	Professors expect you 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.
Teachers carefully monitor class attendance.	Professors may not formally take roll, but they are still likely to know whether or not you attended.
Guiding principle: Teachers bear much of the responsibility for your learning.	**Guiding principle: You bear the responsibility for your learning while your professors serve as guides, mentors, and resources.**

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