

HIGH SCHOOL VS. COLLEGE

GENERAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE PROGRAMMING

Classes

	High School	Post Secondary
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. (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. (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. (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	Post Secondary
1	Grade and check completed homework.	Assume homework is completed and students are able to perform on a test.
2	May remind students of incomplete assignments.	May not remind students of incomplete assignments. It's your responsibility to check with your instructor to see if requirements are being met.
3	May know student's needs and approach students when they need assistance.	Are usually open and helpful, but expect students to initiate contact when assistance is needed.
4	May be available before, during, or after class.	May require students to attend scheduled office hours.
5	Often provide students with information missed during absence.	Expect students to get information from classmates when they miss a class.
6	Present material to help students understand what is in the textbook.	May not follow the textbook. Lectures enhance to topic area. (You need to connect lectures and textbook.)
7	Often write information on the board or overhead to be copied for notes.	May lecture nonstop. If instructors write on the board it may be to support the lecture, not summarize it. (Good notes are a must!)
8	Teach knowledge and facts, leading students through the thinking process.	Expect students to think independently and connect seemingly unrelated information.
9	Often take time to remind students of assignment and test dates.	Expect students to read, save, and refer back to the course syllabus. (Syllabi are your way of knowing exactly what is expected of you-when assignments are due, and how you will be graded.

Studying

	High School	Post Secondary
1	Study time outside of class may vary (maybe as little as 1-3 hours 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. (Use the time between classes carefully.)
3	Expected to read short assignments that are discussed and re-taught.	Substantial amounts of assigned reading and writing may not be directly addressed in class. (It's up to you to read and understand assigned material or access support.)

Testing

	High School	Post Secondary
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 substantial part of your final grade. Contact instructor, academic advisor, or student accessibility personnel if you do poorly.)
5	Graduation requirements may be met with a grade of D or higher.	Requirements may be met only if the student's average meets the departmental standards. (Generally a 2.0 or higher.)

Grades

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Bottom Line

	High School	Post Secondary
1	High School is structured with most decisions being managed by your parents or the state/district. Success is a combination of your efforts and those of others.	College is less restricted and promotes independence. Each college has its own requirements. And, your success is a direct result of the effort you put into it.