# General Differences Between High School and College

## CLASSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HIGH SCHOOL</th>
<th>POSTSECONDARY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Usually follow a school-directed schedule and proceed from one class to another.</td>
<td>Individual students must manage their own time and schedules.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>General education classes dictated by state/district requirements.</td>
<td>Class based on field of study; requirements may vary.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Academic year is divided into two separate 15-week semesters plus a week for final exams. (<strong>Hint:</strong> Some institutions are on a trimester schedule.) Courses are offered fall, spring, and summer semesters, and summer classes may be used to accelerate graduation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Class attendance is usually mandatory and monitored carefully.</td>
<td>Attendance policies may vary with each instructor. (<strong>Hint:</strong> Lack of attendance may impact performance.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Classes generally have no more than 30-35 students.</td>
<td>Classes may have 100 or more students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Textbooks are typically provided at little or no expense.</td>
<td>Textbooks can be expensive. (<strong>Hint:</strong> An anticipated range for a full-time student is $200-$400 per semester.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Guidance is provided for students so that they will be aware of graduation requirements.</td>
<td>Graduation requirements are complex and vary for different fields of study. (<strong>Note:</strong> You are responsible for monitoring your progress and seeking advice.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Modifications that change course outcomes may be offered based on the student’s IEP.</td>
<td>Modifications that change course outcomes will not be offered. (<strong>Hint:</strong> Modified high school courses may not be accepted in the admission process.)</td>
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## INSTRUCTORS

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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Grade and check completed homework.</td>
<td>Assume homework is completed and students are able to perform on a test.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>May remind students of incomplete assignments.</td>
<td>May not remind students of incomplete assignments. It's your responsibility to check with your instructor to see if requirements are being met.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>May know students’ needs and approach students when they need assistance.</td>
<td>Are usually open and helpful, but expect students to initiate contact when assistance is needed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>May be available before, during, or after class.</td>
<td>May require students to attend scheduled office hours.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Have been trained in teaching methods.</td>
<td>Have content knowledge but not necessarily formal training in teaching methods.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Often provide students with information missed during absence.</td>
<td>Expect students to get information from classmates when they miss a class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Present material to help students understand what is in the textbook.</td>
<td>May not follow the textbook. Lectures enhance the topic area. <strong>(Hint:</strong> You need to connect lectures and textbook.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Often write information on the board or overhead to be copied for notes.</td>
<td>May lecture nonstop. If instructors write on the board it may be to support the lecture, not summarize it. <strong>(Hint:</strong> Good notes are a must!)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Teach knowledge and facts, leading students through the thinking process.</td>
<td>Expect students to think independently and connect seemingly unrelated information.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Often take time to remind students of assignment and test dates.</td>
<td>Expect students to read, save, and refer back to the course syllabus. <strong>(Hint:</strong> Syllabi are your way of knowing exactly what is expected of you—when assignments are due, and how you will be graded.)</td>
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### STUDYING

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<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td>Study time outside of class may vary (maybe as little as 1-3 hours per week per class).</td>
<td>Generally need to study at least 2-3 hours outside of class for each hour in class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td>Instructors may review class notes and text material regularly for classes.</td>
<td>Review class notes and text material regularly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Hint: use the time between classes carefully.)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td>Expected to read short assignments that are discussed and retaught.</td>
<td>Substantial amounts of assigned reading and writing may not be directly addressed in class.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(Hint: It’s up to you to read and understand assigned material or access support.)</td>
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### TESTING

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<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td>Frequent, covering small amounts of material.</td>
<td>Usually infrequent (2-3 times a semester).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maybe cumulative and cover large amounts of material.</td>
<td>(Hint: You need to organize material to prepare for tests.)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Some classes may require only papers and/or projects instead of tests.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td>Make-up tests are often available.</td>
<td>Make-up tests are seldom an option and may have to be requested.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td>Test dates can be arranged to avoid conflicts with other events.</td>
<td>Usually, scheduled tests are without regard to other demands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td>Frequently conducts review sessions emphasizing important concepts prior to tests.</td>
<td>Faculty rarely offer review sessions; if so students are expected to be prepared and to be active participants.</td>
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### GRADES

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<td>Given for most assigned work.</td>
<td>May not be provided for all assigned work.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td>Good homework grades may assist in raising over grade when test grades are lower.</td>
<td>Tests and major papers provide the majority of the grade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td>Extra credit options are often available.</td>
<td>Generally speaking, extra-credit options are not used to raise a grade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td>Initial test grades, especially when low, may not have adverse effect on grade.</td>
<td>First tests are often “wake up” calls to let you know what is expected. (Hint: Watch out! They may account for a substantial part of your final grade. Contact instructor, academic advisor, or student accessibility personnel if you do poorly.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td>Graduation requirements may be met with a grade of D or higher.</td>
<td>Requirements may be met only if the student’s average meets the departmental standards. (Hint: Generally a 2.0 or higher.)</td>
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## LAWS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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<td>1</td>
<td>Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).</td>
<td>Section 504 and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Covers ages 3-21 or until regular high school diploma requirements are met.</td>
<td>Covers students with disabilities regardless of age; schools may not discriminate in recruitment, admission, or after admission solely on the basis of a disability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Free, appropriate public education is mandatory.</td>
<td>Students decide to attend and will probably pay tuition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Districts are required to identify students with disabilities through free evaluation and the individualized education program (IEP) process.</td>
<td>Student is responsible for revealing and providing current documentation of a disability. They must self advocate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Students receive special education services to address needs based on an identified disability.</td>
<td>Formal special education services are not available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Services may include specially designed instruction, modifications, and accommodations based on the IEP.</td>
<td>Reasonable accommodations and modifications may be made to provide equal access and participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Individual student needs based on the IEP may be addressed by program support for school personnel.</td>
<td>No formal program support for school personnel is provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Progress toward IEP goals is monitored and communicated to the parent(s) and the student.</td>
<td>Students are required to monitor their own progress and communicate their needs to instructors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Schools assist in connecting the student with community support agencies if identified as a transition need according to the IEP.</td>
<td>Students are responsible for making their own connections with community support agencies.</td>
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## OTHER FACTORS TO CONSIDER

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<td>State and/or district policies may determine eligibility for participation in extracurricular activities.</td>
<td>Postsecondary institution policies may determine eligibility for participation in extracurricular activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Parents typically manage finances for school-related activities.</td>
<td>Students are responsible for money management of basic needs and extra spending money. (Hint: Outside jobs may be necessary and one more “activity” to consider for time management.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Parents and teachers may provide support and guidance in responsibilities and setting priorities.</td>
<td>Students are responsible for setting their own priorities.</td>
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Adapted from: SMU A-LEC Home pages and OKC Community College Accessibility Handbook