











Supporting Students with Disabilities

Key Differences Between K-12 and College

Developed in partnership with the Idaho Division of Career Technical Education, Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Idaho Department of Education, and the Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, this resource helps educators, counselors and support staff understand the key differences between K-12 and college supports for students with disabilities.

The table below shows the comparison of topic between K-12 and college.

TOPIC	K-12	COLLEGE
Applicable laws 	Schools identify students and provide services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004 Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Title II 	Students must qualify and request accommodations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ADA, Title II
Eligibility 	Support is school-driven: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students qualify through IDEA or Section 504 Schools evaluate at no cost Eligibility determined by the school for an IEP Eligibility determined through documentation of a disability for a 504 plan or process 	Support is student-driven and based on current impact: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IDEA no longer applies Students must meet ADA/504 criteria IEPs may be a tool used to outline needs but does not guarantee services
Required documentation 	Documentation focuses on eligibility: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IEP plan or 504 plan/process IEP Present Level of Performance (PLOP) IEP Evaluations provided at no cost 	Documentation must justify accommodations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 504 plan/process might need to be updated Students may need updated evaluations Need must be demonstrated to support accommodations
Self-advocacy 	Support is initiated by the school: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School identifies students School arranges accommodations Teachers offer support 	Support happens only if the student asks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students must self-identify Students request accommodations
Parental role 	Parents are part of the process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents have access to records Parents participate and advocate 	Students take full responsibility: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents need student consent Students advocate for themselves
Instruction 	Instruction may be adjusted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers may modify curriculum Assignments may be adapted 	Students must meet course expectations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professors do not modify curriculum Students manage learning independently
Grades and tests 	Support built into grading. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Test formats may be modified Frequent testing Makeup tests often available 	Students must manage requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited format changes Makeup tests rarely available Students follow syllabus
Responsibility for study 	School structures workload: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structured time Less independent study 	Students manage their own time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-managed time More study required

TOPIC	K-12	COLLEGE
<p data-bbox="115 138 261 205">State agency support</p>    	<p data-bbox="350 138 854 163">Idaho Division of Career Technical Education</p> <ul data-bbox="375 174 980 317" style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal funding may support IEP or 504 CTE services • GED testing available with accommodations through the GED website <p data-bbox="350 342 829 367">Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation</p> <ul data-bbox="375 378 964 554" style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides pre-employment transition services (ages 14-21), including career exploration, self-advocacy, and work-based learning. Can provide support, transition, and employment services to eligible individuals <p data-bbox="350 567 708 592">Idaho Department of Education</p> <ul data-bbox="375 602 873 674" style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides funding, technical assistance and professional development <p data-bbox="350 697 959 722">Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired</p> <ul data-bbox="375 732 971 875" style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to students (ages 14–21) who are blind or visually impaired, including orientation and mobility and other vision-specific supports. 	<p data-bbox="1032 138 1536 163">Idaho Division of Career Technical Education</p> <ul data-bbox="1057 174 1528 317" style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal funding may support 504 CTE services at technical colleges • Students may request accommodations through the college <p data-bbox="1032 342 1511 367">Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation</p> <ul data-bbox="1057 378 1495 520" style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides pre-employment transition services until the age of 22. Provides support, transition, and employment services to eligible individuals <p data-bbox="1032 533 1390 558">Idaho Department of Education</p> <ul data-bbox="1057 569 1500 640" style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports statewide collaboration and transition efforts <p data-bbox="1032 663 1536 730">Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired</p> <ul data-bbox="1057 741 1568 884" style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides vocational rehabilitation services to college students who are blind or visually impaired, including assistive technology and academic support.
<p data-bbox="90 919 285 945">Accommodations</p> 	<ul data-bbox="375 919 967 1062" style="list-style-type: none"> • Idaho SESTA: Understanding Accommodations and Adaptations • Quick Guide: Accommodations vs. Adaptations • Job Accommodation Network (JAN) 	<ul data-bbox="1057 919 1122 945" style="list-style-type: none"> • JAN
<p data-bbox="115 1094 261 1119">Auxiliary aids</p> 	<ul data-bbox="375 1094 967 1346" style="list-style-type: none"> • ADA National Network: What kinds of auxiliary aids and services are required by the ADA to ensure effective communication with individuals with hearing or vision impairments? • Idaho Special Education Support and Technical Assistance (SESTA): Assistive technology • Idaho Assistive Technology Project (IATP) 	<ul data-bbox="1057 1094 1568 1312" style="list-style-type: none"> • ADA National Network: What kinds of auxiliary aids and services are required by the ADA to ensure effective communication with individuals with hearing or vision impairments? • Idaho Assistive Technology Project
<p data-bbox="139 1381 237 1407">Services</p> 	<ul data-bbox="375 1381 984 2039" style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. Department of Education: Individuals with Disabilities • Idaho Department of Education: Special Education Manual • Idaho Special Education Support and Technical Assistance (SESTA): Provides resources, technical assistance and training to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. Also offers assistive technology lending and consultation services to support access and engagement. • IATP: Helps individuals with disabilities access and fund assistive technology to increase independence. Services include device lending, consultations and funding support. • Idaho Parents Unlimited (IPUL): Helps families navigate health care and education systems and supports transition to adulthood through training and resources. 	<ul data-bbox="1057 1381 1576 2005" style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. Department of Education: Individuals with Disabilities • SESTA: Provides resources, technical assistance and training to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. Also offers assistive technology lending and consultation services to support access and engagement. • IATP: Helps individuals with disabilities access and fund assistive technology to increase independence. Services include device lending, consultations and funding support. • IPUL: Helps families navigate health care and education systems and supports transition to adulthood through training and resources.