

## Differences between High School and University

Within the kindergarten through twelfth grade system (K-12), school districts must do everything in their power to assure success for students with disabilities. Once a student with disabilities graduates from high school and turns eighteen years of age, the focus changes from **success** to **access**. Access deals with granting accommodations and academic adjustments to students with disabilities so that they have an even chance to be successful. Not all disabilities require academic adjustment, nor do students with the same disability diagnosis require the same accommodations.

While students in the K-12 system may have Individualized Education Plans (IEP's) or a 504 Plan, those designations do not necessarily apply to the postsecondary setting. Colleges do not use IEP's and, although students with disabilities are covered under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, again the focus changes to equal access for adults\*.

Another major difference from the K-12 system is parental rights. As a minor, your parents have been responsible for every aspect of your life, including education. Once you turn 18 and graduate from high school you are considered an adult; your parents will only have as much input as you allow. Without your expressed, written permission, many college offices and professors will not even speak with your parents. Students, with or without disabilities) are expected to make their needs known to the appropriate university personnel. The university is not expected to nor required to anticipate the needs of individual students.

\*Taken from: Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities; U.S. Department of Education; Office of Civil Rights; Washington, D.C.; 2005