# STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES GUIDE

The law changes drastically when you graduate from high school, whether that is at the age of 18, or when you age out at 22. It is important to understand how your rights will shift when you enter college and beyond. This document will provide an overview of the transition from high school to college from a legal perspective, as well as provide you with things you can do to help make your college experience a successful one.

# YOUR TRANSITION FROM HIGH SCHOOL TO COLLEGE

When you attended a kindergarten through grade 12 school, the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) dictated how you received access to accommodations and modifications. When you enter college, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) dictates how you receive access to accommodations.

**The chart below outlines the major differences between IDEA and ADA laws as they pertain to your education.**

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| Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) | Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) |
| The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a law that makes a free and appropriate public education available to eligible children with disabilities throughout the nation and ensures special education and related services to those children. | The **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. It says people with disabilities should have the same opportunities as everyone else to participate in mainstream life. ADA is an “equal opportunity” law for people with disabilities. |
| Young people are entitled to supportive services until they graduate high school or turn 22 (whichever comes first) under IDEA. | People must self-disclose in order to receive supportive services under ADA. |
| IDEA law allows eligible students to request both accommodations and modifications. | ADA law allows people with disabilities to request accommodations only. |
| Eligible students receive services through an IEP or 504 Plan under IDEA law. | People with disabilities receive reasonable accommodations under ADA law. |

# STUDENTs’ AND PARENTS’ ROLES MAY CHANGE IN COLLEGE

* Once you turn 18 and graduate from high school, you are seen as an adult in the eyes of the law and therefore have the right/responsibility to make your own educational decisions.
* Your parents can encourage you to request accommodations but cannot make the decision for you. To get help, **you** will have to ask. Your professors and other staff members at the college want to help, but they won’t know what you need until you—not your parents—ask.

**Here are some important things you should know when you enter college:**

* No one at a post-secondary institution will ask you if you have a disability or if you need help. Instead, you must provide documentation to the ACCESS Center and complete an intake form in your student portal to be eligible for accommodations in your classes. It is also **your** responsibility to provide your accommodation letter to each of your professors every semester.
* You have the right to not disclose your disability if you choose not to. However, if you do not disclose your disability, you are **not** entitled to any accommodations in your classes nor support from the ACCESS Center.
* Accommodations are not retroactive. In other words, if you fail a test without accommodations from the ACCESS Center but then get accommodations in place after the fact, you cannot go back and retake that test.
* Accommodations are in place to help you access the same content as everyone else. No one would deny a person their eyeglasses if they needed them to read. The same goes for accommodations—they are there to help you access class content.
* There is a difference between accommodations and modifications, and only accommodations are offered in college to eligible students.
* **Accommodations**are supports that help you access the content in your classes in K-12 and college environments. For example, having access to extended time on exams or a notetaker would be considered accommodations. Accommodations exist in college if requested and approved. Accommodations are determined on a case-by-case basis through an interactive process.
* **Modifications**are changes to the curriculum or requirements of a course that are given to students in K-12 environments only. For example, in a class where peers must write a five-page research paper, the curriculum is modified and the student is allowed to write a one-page paper. Modifications do not exist in college.
* A special note to former Chicago Public Schools students with disabilities: You may be eligible to receive City Colleges of Chicago SUCCESS coaching, which offers monthly supports and possible scholarships for those who participate fully. To sign up to be contacted by a SUCCESS coach, please fill out [**this form**](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=1YBeU6mZyE-oKrrrKU2iNnvp9Yd_uURDjNkNNuWDZFFUREE3ODNPNzdVTUVRM0dNTFJZRFc2RE5BNC4u)**.** For more information, please contact Dani Smith at[**dsmith235@ccc.edu**](mailto:dsmith235@ccc.edu).