



# How Will College Be Different From High School?

## A Guide to Students' Academic Transitions

The transition from high school to college can be exciting, complex and scary – all at the same time. At Career Vision, we know the importance of information and preparation. We hope this resource will be a useful tool for building confidence and setting expectations.

### HIGH SCHOOL

#### Personal Freedom in High School

- High school is mandatory and free (unless you choose other options).
- Your time is usually structured by others.
- You need money for special purchases or events.
- You can count on parents and teachers to remind you of your responsibilities and to guide you in setting priorities.

*Guiding principle: You usually will be told what your responsibilities are and corrected if your behavior is out of line.*

#### High School Classes

- Each day you proceed from one class directly to another.
- You spend six hours each day - 30 hours a week - in class.
- The school year is 36 weeks long; some classes extend over both semesters and some do not.
- Most of your classes are arranged for you.
- Teachers carefully monitor class attendance.
- Classes generally have no more than 35 students.
- You are provided with textbooks at little or no expense.
- You are not responsible for knowing what it takes to graduate.

#### High School Teachers

- Teachers check your completed homework.
- Teachers remind you of incomplete work.
- Teachers approach you if they believe you need assistance.
- Teachers often are available for conversation before, during, or after class.
- Teachers provide you with information you missed when you were absent.
- Teachers often take time to remind you of assignments and due dates.

### COLLEGE

#### Personal Freedom in College

- College is voluntary and costly.
- You manage your own time.
- You must decide whether to participate in extra-curricular activities.
- You need money to meet basic necessities.
- You will be faced with a large number of moral and ethical decisions you have not had to face previously.
- You must balance your responsibilities and set priorities.

*Guiding principle: You're old enough to take responsibility for what you do and don't do, as well as for the consequences of your decisions.*

#### College Classes

- You often have hours between classes; class times vary throughout the day and evening.
- You spend 15-16 hours each week in class.
- The academic year is divided into two separate 15-week semesters, plus a week after each semester for exams.
- You arrange your own schedule in consultation with your academic adviser. Professors may not formally take attendance, but they are still likely to know whether or not you attended.
- Classes may number 100 students or more.
- You need to budget substantial funds for textbooks, which usually will cost about \$500 each semester.
- Graduation requirements are complex, and differ for different majors and sometimes different years. You are expected to know those that apply to you.
- Many professors use Blackboard or WebBoard (course management systems) to post grades, information, and assignments.

#### College Professors

- Professors may not always check completed homework, but they will assume you can perform the same tasks on tests.
- Professors may not remind you of incomplete work.
- Professors are usually open and helpful, but most expect you to initiate contact if you need assistance.
- Professors expect and want you to attend their scheduled office hours.
- Professors expect you to read, save, and consult the course syllabus (outline); the syllabus spells out exactly what is expected of you, when it is due, and how you will be graded.



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### HIGH SCHOOL

#### Studying in High School

You may study outside of class as little as zero to two hours a week, and this may be mostly last-minute test preparation.

You often need to read or hear presentations only once to learn all you need to learn about them.

You are expected to read short assignments that are then discussed, and often retaught, in class.

*Guiding principle: You will usually be told in class what you need to learn from assigned readings.*

#### Tests in High School

Testing is frequent and covers small amounts of material.

Makeup tests are often available.

Teachers frequently rearrange test dates to avoid conflict with school events.

Mastery is usually seen as the ability to reproduce what you were taught in the form in which it was presented to you, or to solve the kinds of problems you were shown how to solve.

#### Grades in High School

Grades are given for most assigned work.

Consistently good homework grades may help raise your overall grade when test grades are low.

You may graduate as long as you have passed all required courses with a grade of D or higher.

*Guiding principle: "Effort counts." Courses are usually structured to reward a "good-faith effort."*

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### COLLEGE

#### Studying in College

You may need to study at least two to three hours outside of class for each hour in class.

You need to review class notes and text material regularly.

You are assigned substantial amounts of reading and writing that may not be directly addressed in class.

*Guiding principle: It's up to you to read and understand the assigned material; lectures and assignments proceed from the assumption that you've already done so.*

#### Tests in College

Testing is usually infrequent and may be cumulative, covering large amounts of material.

You, not the professor, need to organize the material to prepare for the test.

A particular course may have only two or three tests in a semester.

Makeup tests are seldom an option; if they are, you need to request them.

Professors in different courses usually schedule tests without regard to the demands of other courses or outside activities.

Mastery is often seen as the ability to apply what you've learned to new situations or to solve new problems.

#### Grades in College

Grades may not be provided for all assigned work.

Grades on tests and major papers usually provide most of the course grade.

You may graduate only if your average in classes meets the departmental standard - typically a 2.00 GPA or grade of C.

*Guiding principle: "Results count." Though "good-faith effort" is important in regard to the professor's willingness to help you achieve good results, it will not substitute for results in the grading process.*

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