

Parent Guide



Office of Access & Learning Accommodation

Paul L. Foster Success Center

OALA Parent Guide

College life poses different challenges for students with disabilities. When students enroll in college, they are considered responsible adults by faculty and staff. The expectations are that they will assume responsibilities for meeting their class requirements. This added responsibility is coupled with a change in environment. Whereas the high school was a very structured environment with a set schedule, college schedules can vary dramatically. For the first time students may have considerable time between classes and frequently do not use this time wisely. Students must enforce their own attendance policies and prepare to realize personal consequences if they choose not to attend class. Once students turn 18 years old, they are legally an adult, responsible for their own actions and decisions.

We hope this handbook will help you better understand some of those distinctions and provide tips on how best to support your son or daughter in college.

Differences between High School & College

There are many differences between how disability services are provided at the K-12 level and at the post-secondary level. While it is not practical to list them all, there are some key points to know. The changes reflect the fact that the college student is no longer a minor and is now responsible for making decisions as to his or her education. For further discussion, you may wish to review the guidance of the U.S. Department of Education (U.S. Dept. of Ed., Office for Civil Rights, Students With Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities, Washington, D.C., 2011).

HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
Parents are responsible for making sure their school is accommodating their student appropriately.	The parent is no longer responsible for making sure their student receives accommodations. This is now the student's responsibility both to initiate and to make the appropriate office aware if they are not receiving needed accommodations. As adults, students have the discretion to not seek or use accommodations.
Schools will make academic adjustments based on IEP or 504 Plans.	Documentation of the disability is your student's responsibility. The student is required to provide appropriate documentation of their disability. In some cases, this may mean the student will need to obtain and pay for current documentation.
High School can change academic requirements for your student.	Colleges are not required to reduce or waive essential course or program requirements.
HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIC ADJUSTMENTS	COLLEGE ACCOMMODATIONS
High school allows shortened or extensions on assignments.	In college, shortened assignments or extension are not a reasonable accommodation.
High school allows the use of notes, formulas or word banks on exams.	The use of these items on exams is not considered a reasonable accommodation in college. Individual instructors determine what notes are permitted for all students in the class.
High school explains questions using different words.	Explaining questions using different words is not reasonable in college.
High school can request a copy of the teacher's notes.	Requesting a copy of a professor's notes is not a reasonable accommodation. The notes are many times considered intellectual property of the professor.

Additional helpful information:

- At the college level, students must request services. Students must self-identify to the OALA office as having a disability and present appropriate documentation. Registering once is not enough. Students must contact the office at the beginning of every semester to affirm that they still have a disability and that they wish to receive accommodations. There are several reasons for this. First, some students receive temporary accommodations and need to renew them. Other students may choose not to use accommodations that were previously approved. The student will log into Bearweb to request letters of accommodation for the current semester. Even if OALA and an instructor know that a student has a disability and is eligible for an accommodation, if the student does not request and provide letters to their faculty, then they will not receive any accommodations.
- College students must notify their faculty directly as to their accommodation needs and initiate a discussion over how those needs and accommodations may apply to the requirements in that course. OALA will not, as a general rule, contact instructors for students prior to this initial discussion, but will facilitate if questions or issues arise in a particular class.
- Colleges are not obligated to provide the exact same accommodations as were given at any point from K-12. Even if an accommodation is listed on a 504 Plan or other documents, the OALA office may determine that is not reasonable at the college level. Similarly, OALA's determination that a student's documentation supports a particular accommodation does not mean that accommodation is needed or appropriate in every course, if it would result in waiving essential course requirements.

How parents can help:

The following are some important ways parents can help:

- Encourage your son or daughter to take advantage of available services. While services cannot be forced upon a student, it is in the student's best interest to know what services he or she is eligible for.
- Encourage your son or daughter to meet with OALA staff at the start of each semester. Even if a student does not want services or accommodations, it is helpful for the student to discuss this with a staff member. It also helps us be aware of how each student is doing and makes it easier to offer assistance should the student change their mind during the course of a semester.
- Encourage your son or daughter to meet with OALA staff at least once more during the semester to check in and let us know if they need any additional services or assistance. Some good times are a few weeks before mid-term exams and evaluations, and a few weeks before finals and end-of-the-semester evaluations. Students are, of course, welcome anytime.
- Encourage your son or daughter to familiarize themselves with the contents of the OALA webpage (www.baylor.edu/oala) or Facebook to check for any announcements or upcoming deadlines. A link to the New Student Handbook is available for students to review on the OALA website as well.
- Encourage your son or daughter to speak up for him or herself and to be on his or her own best advocate.
- Encourage your son or daughter to meet regularly with his or her instructors to get feedback as to their progress in class, and to check in with their academic advisor as well.

Communication

While students may sign a release of information with OALA and a FERPA form, the OALA staff still communicates primarily with the student. In the past, parents may have communicated on the student's behalf in high school. College is a different environment in which each student needs to grow and develop their self-advocacy skills. We recommend that you discuss college life with your student if you are interested in knowing about his/her experiences. If you contact OALA and would like to discuss concerns about your child, you are welcome to do so, but arrangements must be made with OALA staff for the student to be present in order to discuss any specific information regarding the student. The OALA staff will be happy to speak with parents and answer any basic questions but will not share specific information about their student unless the student is present or has specifically requested the information be shared. OALA, as well as all University offices, will typically handle matters directly with students, and reserves the right to not communicate or include parents in communications.

Contact Information

Office of Access and Learning Accommodation (OALA)

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OALA@Baylor.edu

Hours of Operation:

8:00 AM – 5:00 PM Monday – Friday

Mission Statement:

The mission of the Office of Access and Learning Accommodation is to ensure equal access and opportunities to all students with disabilities. We strive to provide a supportive and enriching environment in which students can achieve success.

Services:

- Time management skills
- Interpreting services for students with hearing impairments
- Note-taking services for eligible students
- Faculty education
- Alternate format of text
- Alternate testing facility
- Readers
- Assistive technology/software
- Adaptive equipment (tables, chairs, etc.)
- Housing accommodations
- Meal plan modifications
- Foreign language considerations

Categories of Disabilities Accommodated:

- Learning Disabilities
- Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder
- Physical Disabilities: hearing, vision, medical, orthopedic, etc.
- Psychological/Emotional
- Pervasive Developmental Disorder(Asperger's Syndrome)

