

High School vs College Expectations

College classes, expectations, and assignments are different from those in high school. Basic descriptions of high school and college atmospheres are shown below. High schools abide by rules set by a school district. High schools, themselves, have a little leeway within these rules, but generally, they must follow the rules and standards of the school district.

College and university rules across the country are mostly similar to each other and adhere to rules for accreditation. Department policies vary widely but must generally follow the standards set by their colleges. Faculty members (professors and instructors) follow the rules of their departments, but the faculty members mostly have freedom to conduct their classes as they see fit. Those policies are clearly stated in your professors' syllabi.

Instance	High School	College
Course Commitment in the Classroom and on Assignments	Varies. Many high school courses last for the entire school year.	Courses are sixteen weeks or shorter. All classes, regardless of length, require the same number of hours of attendance and require at least twice the study time and effort as high school classes. Workloads are heavier, and grading standards are more rigorous.
Disruptive Behavior	Schools have policies to deal with different levels of disruptions. Teachers can decide how much to discipline a student in some instances.	Professors can kick you out of the room for any behavior they believe is adversely affecting instruction or student learning. This includes constant cell usage, sleeping in class, and chatting with classmates.
"I forgot my book."	Teacher has to keep you in the classroom.	Professor can kick you out for being unprepared.
"But I tried really hard! Why didn't I get an A?"	A teacher might consider this when assigning a grade for	Professors only grade the finished product, not how

	your work.	much you tried to do well.
Late for Classes	Teachers must allow you into the room.	Professors can refuse you entry.
Missed Classes	ISD's set attendance policies.	Professors set their own attendance policies.
Missed Assignments	Teachers must allow you to do the work within an established time, provided you have an excused absence. Other ISD rules apply.	Professors are not obligated to allow you to make up the work, if your excuse does not fall under federal guidelines, such as deployment and ADA compliance. You may receive a zero for missed work.
Missed In-class Exam / Midterm / In-class quizzes	Likely, same as "Missed Assignments."	Often, same as "Missed Assignments." Missed midterms often result in an automatic zero.
Missed Final Exams	Either the ISD or the high school sets the policy.	Colleges do not allow for late exams unless the excuse would violate federal standards such as deployment or ADA compliance.
Cheating / Plagiarism	Possible zero. ISD sets general rules as stated in the district's handbook.	Professors have complete authority to decide what to do about this. The most common outcome is a zero on the assignment. For major assignments, professors often report students to the dean for violations of "academic integrity."

This information was compiled and written for Houston Community College students using online tutoring. This is the intellectual property of Houston Community College.