

Differences Between Elementary, Secondary And Post-Secondary Levels Of Education

Elementary (K-8)	Secondary (9-12)	Post-Secondary (College and University)
Identifying Students		
Students are identified as "exceptional" through an Identification Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) process that involves the parents. IPRC recommendations may focus on educational needs or include referrals for assessment. Formal documentation of a disability is not a requirement for identification. Placement is reviewed on a yearly basis.	The IPRC review process and recommendations continue automatically from elementary to secondary school. This process can also be initiated at the secondary level at the parent's or school's request.	There is no IPRC process in college. Students are responsible for providing documentation of their disability and accommodation needs. The Disability Services Office determines appropriate accommodations based on the documentation, college policy, and student input.
Provincial regulations require that the parents are consulted in the development and review of the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP), and that a copy of the IEP is provided to the parents upon completion.	Provincial regulations require that both students 16 years of age or older and parents are included in the IEP process. A copy of the IEP is provided to both the parents and the students upon its completion.	In keeping with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA), all documentation, communication and records pertaining to students are private and confidential. The Disability Services Office may release information or communicate with individuals designated by the student only after the student has provided written consent.
A student's educational needs are stated on an IEP that results from an IPRC. Professional assessments are not necessarily a requirement to receive accommodations. If assessments are deemed necessary, they can be arranged and paid for by the appropriate school board.	The responsibility for assessment and accommodation is the same as at the elementary level. Regulation 181/98 requires that the IEP of an "exceptional" student who is 14 years of age or older must include a plan for the student's transition to appropriate postsecondary activities, such as work, further education, or community living.	The student is responsible for providing up-to-date documentation, such as professional assessments and Transition Plans, to the disability services office of the college.
Addressing Needs		
The school board and the	If the student has an IEP from	The student must formally

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school develop an IEP for all students identified as “exceptional” by IPRC. An IEP may be developed for a student who has not been formally identified.	elementary school, it will be forwarded with the school records, but should be reviewed and revised when the student enters high school. Students may be identified as “exceptional” at the high school level.	register with the Disability Services Office. Based on the disability documentation provided by the student, accommodations and services are determined in a co-operative process between the student and the Disabilities Consultant.
A student’s classroom placement is decided at an IPRC review. Placement can range from a regular classroom with accommodation to a full-time special education class with a student- to-teacher ratio as small as 8:1.	The student participates in regular class curriculum with accommodations or modifications based on the student’s IEP. Some secondary schools have “resource rooms” where staff accommodate tests, provide additional assistance in completing class assignments, and offer learning strategy instruction.	The role of the Disability Services Office is to ensure the provision of accommodations. All classes are regular classes. Accommodations are based on the disability documentation provided by the student. Any additional instruction or tutoring required must be arranged by the student and occurs outside of the regular timetable.
The implementation of an IEP is governed by the provincial Education Act.	The legislation directing the implementation of an IEP is the same as at the elementary level.	The student’s right to disability services and accommodations is protected by federal and provincial Human Rights legislation.
Accommodating Students		
The student’s school board and school ensure that the IEP is followed.	The responsibility for implementing an IEP is the same as at the elementary level.	Once accommodations are designated by the Disability Services Office, students choose which accommodations they will use and when they will use them. Accommodations are not automatically implemented; they are only provided at the request of the student.
The provision of accommodations does not mean the curriculum has been modified. In some cases, however, the learning outcomes of the standard curriculum may be modified to meet the student’s learning expectations.	The provision of accommodations does not change the learning expectations. Credit courses may only be minimally modified with the consent of the Principal.	Fundamental modifications to curriculum and program standards are not permitted. Accommodations may not compromise essential course standards or impose “undue hardship” on an institution

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Any professional and/or paraprofessional special education support staff and/or services detailed in the IEP must be provided by the school board.	The provision of specialized staffing and services is the same as at the elementary level.	No personal staff or services are provided by the Disability Services Office. The student is responsible for securing any additional staff or services (e.g., personal care attendants, specialized tutors, or therapists).
Student records are accessible to students and parents.	The accessibility of student records is the same as at the elementary level. Records are transferred automatically from elementary to secondary school.	An enrolled college student's records are only accessible to the student. Parents have access only if the student gives written consent. Student records are NOT automatically transferred from secondary to post-secondary
Special consideration is given for behavioural problems.	Students must follow the high school behaviour code.	Students must follow the college code of conduct; no special consideration is given for misconduct.
Student progression from kindergarten to grade 8 is guaranteed. Curriculum may be modified to meet individual student needs.	Progression to graduation is not guaranteed; however, minor curriculum modifications may be permitted with the consent of the Principal.	Graduation is dependent on fulfilling all program requirements. Curriculum modifications are extremely rare and must not alter essential program standards.

Adapted with permission from **Pathways to Post-Secondary: A Transition Guide for People with Disabilities to Humber College Institute Of Technology & Advanced Learning and the University Of Guelph-Humber (2008)**