

Building toward success:

Tips for communicating with your instructors about accommodations

The final step in the accommodation process occurs when you meet with your instructors to implement your accommodations. The following tips will help you successfully prepare for and conduct this meeting.

Before your meeting with instructors:

1. Make your [Semester Request on DASS Link](#). DASS will then share your accommodation letters with your instructors.

TIPS:

- You can complete your Semester Request starting 2 weeks before the beginning of a new term.
- Instructors will be unlikely to help you with accommodations if they haven't received your accommodation letters.

2. Schedule an appointment with each of your instructors to talk about your accommodations.

TIPS:

- Check your syllabi for your professors' office hours and meet with them then.
- If an instructor's office hours conflict with your classes, email, call, or ask them in person if you can come by at a particular time to discuss your accommodations.
- Meeting in person and in a private setting eliminates the feeling of being rushed, increases privacy, minimizes distractions, and allows you to begin building a rapport with your instructor.

3. Plan how you will explain your learning needs and why your accommodations will help you be a successful learner in class.

TIPS:

- Share your strengths, challenges, classroom accommodations, and strategies which have been most helpful to you in the past
- Think of specific examples showing how your disability interferes with your learning in and out of class. These examples show your professors you're aware of your strengths and weaknesses and comfortable advocating for yourself.
- If you're unsure about what to say in your meeting, use the sample script at the end of this document as a guideline.

4. Adopt the attitude that your professors want to help you.

TIPS:

- Your success in college will be determined in great part by the type and quality of interactions you have with faculty. Try to eliminate negative thoughts or memories of past classroom issues.
- View your meeting as a way to begin building positive interactions with those who are important to your education and academic success.

During your meeting with instructors:

1. If you make an appointment, show up on time!

TIPS:

- If the instructor is late, wait at least 5 to 10 minutes, and then leave a note.
- If you must reschedule your appointment, contact the instructor with as much advance notice as possible.
- If you miss an appointment, apologize in person and reschedule.

2. Dos and Don'ts:

DO:

- Be friendly, greet your instructors, and try to maintain eye contact.
- Show interest in them and the class they teach.
- Maintain a courteous and professional demeanor.
- Project yourself as a serious, motivated student who wants to be successful in their class.
- Be assertive about your needs and assume you are working together to plan for your accommodations.
- Remember to thank your instructors for their time.

DON'T:

- Don't be aggressive.
- Don't get mad.
- Don't take up unreasonable amounts of their time.
- Don't interrupt.

3. We recommend students complete these meetings before the end of the second week of classes.

After your meeting with instructors:

1. Make the most of your accommodations by maintaining dialogue with your instructors. Frequent communication between instructor and student helps accommodations work well.

TIPS:

- Talk with your instructors throughout the term to inform them of challenges you are facing in the class.
- Always react positively and communicate openly with your instructors.
- Ask questions to clarify statements from your instructor. Repeat what you heard to ensure you both understand the issue.
- Email etiquette: Unless an instructor tells you otherwise, keep your emails with them formal. Always include a subject line. Greet your instructor with "Dear," not "Hi" or "Hey." If you don't know your instructor's title (e.g., Mr., Mrs., Ms., Dr.) refer to them as Professor. Don't call your instructors by their first names. Always introduce yourself with your full name and what class and section you're in.
- Remind your instructor about your agreed-upon arrangement for testing one week prior to each test. If you don't do this, faculty may assume you are not planning to use your accommodations. Last-minute requests create tension between you and your instructors

2. Your positive work ethic will continue to promote you as a responsible student. Be dependable.

TIPS:

- Attend all classes.
- Arrive to class on time.
- Complete assigned work and readings by their due dates.

3. Your instructor may have questions about your accommodations or the accommodation process.

TIPS:

- If you know the answer and you're comfortable answering the instructor's question, practice self-advocacy and do it!
- If not, that's ok. Email your DASS Coordinator and explain the situation, or suggest the instructor contact DASS directly for clarification.

Remember, for many students, well-executed accommodations mean the difference between success and failure.

Sample Script:

Introduction

"Hi, Professor _____, my name is _____ and I'm in your _____ class. Thank you for meeting with me today."

Accommodation Letter

"I want to discuss my accommodation letter which explains the accommodations I will need for your class. It is viewable in the DASS Link system for you. I am strong in _____ (fill in with one or two academic skills or abilities that come easy for you) but the accommodations really help me to _____ (identify one of your learning challenges). I met with the DASS office earlier and the following accommodations were authorized for your class:

1. (describe the accommodation)
2. (describe the accommodation)

Can you share with me how you have put accommodations like these in place before? How do you prefer I remind you of my accommodations prior to tests? Do you prefer an email, phone call or coming up after class? Can you offer any suggestions on how best to succeed in this class?