



Building Toward Success: **Tips for Communicating with Your Professors About Accommodations**

One of the final steps in putting your accommodations in place occurs when you meet with your professors to review and sign the accommodation letter. The tips below will help you successfully prepare for and conduct this meeting with your professors.

Before your meeting with professors:

- (1) Schedule an appointment with your professors to talk about your accommodations after you have picked up your accommodation letter. Do this as early in the semester as possible, ideally during the first week of classes.
 - Check your syllabi for your professors' office hours. If they conflict with your classes, email, call or ask them in person if you can come by at a particular time to discuss your accommodations. A pre-arranged appointment in a private setting eliminates the feeling of being rushed, increases privacy, minimizes distractions and allows you to begin building a rapport with your professor.
- (2) Plan in advance how you will explain your learning needs and why the accommodations you have been granted will help you be a successful learner in class. Some ideas:
 - Share your strengths, 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 are aware of your strengths and weaknesses and are comfortable advocating for yourself.
- (3) Adopt the attitude that your professors want to help you.
 - 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 professors:

- (1) If you make an appointment, show up on time!
 - If you show up and the professor is late, wait at least 5 to 10 minutes, and then leave a note. If you must reschedule your appointment, contact the professor with as much advance notice as possible. If you miss an appointment, apologize in person and reschedule.
- (2) Do's and Don't's:
 - Do: Be friendly, greet your instructors and 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.

If you are unsure about what to say in your meeting, use the following script as a guideline.

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. Here is a copy of my accommodation letter for you to review and keep. 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 DRC 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?"

Closing

"Thank you for meeting with me today and working with me to provide my accommodations. I am looking forward to working with you."

(Adapted from www.going-to-college.org)

After your meeting with professors:

For many students, well-executed accommodations mean the difference between success and failure. After your meeting, make the most of your accommodations by maintaining dialogue with your professors.

Communicate:

Talk with your professors throughout the semester to inform them of challenges you are facing in the class. Frequent communication between professor and student helps accommodations work well. Always react positively and communicate openly with your professors.

- Ask questions to clarify statements from your professor. Repeat what you heard to make sure you both understand the issue.
- Email etiquette: Only send emails that contain language you would feel comfortable saying in person. Do not send emails in ALL CAPS or use text-speak, and always include a subject line.
- **Remind** your professor about your agreed-upon arrangement for testing **one week prior to each test**. If you do not do so, faculty may assume you are not planning to use your accommodations. Last-minute requests create tension between you and your professors.

Class Work:

Remember the basics. Be dependable. Attend all classes, arrive on time, and complete work by due dates. Your positive work ethic will continue to promote you as a responsible student.

Trouble-Shooting:

If it appears your professor has questions about your accommodations or the process, contact DRC for an appointment. You may also suggest the professor contact DRC directly for clarification.

Disability Resource Center (DRC)

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