

Guide to Communicating Effectively with Your Professors

Communication with your professors is an essential part of implementing and managing your accommodations. When your accommodations are approved and you receive your accommodations letter, it is up to you to develop a plan with each of your professors for how your accommodations will be implemented. This is your chance to advocate for yourself so professors can understand you better as a learner and build a stronger relationship. You will be in these professor's class for about four months, sometimes even having the same professor multiple times, so it is important to build that relationship with faculty.

Implementing Your Accommodations

At the beginning of each semester (or when your accommodations are approved), you will need to submit a Semester Request through [Accommodate](#) to activate your accommodations. After completing the Semester Request a copy of your accommodations letter will be sent to your professors. This is a great time to meet and communicate with your professors, give professors a chance to ask questions, and provide clarification about how your accommodations will work in their learning environment. Be proactive and do not wait until you are struggling academically to have this conversation.

Remember, while you do not have to disclose the nature of your disability to your professors, having them know the impact your disability has on your learning can help them implement your accommodations better.

Meeting in Person

In-person meetings can help facilitate an interactive discussion between you and your professors.

- Check your syllabi for your professors' office hours, email your professors to schedule an appointment, or ask to arrange a meeting time before or after class to discuss your accommodations
- Arrive at your in-person meeting on time with a positive attitude
- When starting the topic of your accommodations, be direct and to the point:

“I have an approved accommodations letter from the Accessibility Services Office and would like to discuss a plan about implementing my accommodations in your class. I have completed my Semester Request on Accommodate which should have sent you a copy of my letter.”

- Talk about how your disability impacts you academically and, if comfortable, socially
- Point out your strengths and challenging areas as a student and a learner
- Ask your professors how they prefer to communicate about your accommodations throughout the semester
- If your professors have any additional questions regarding your accommodations that you cannot answer or do not feel comfortable answering, they can contact Accessibility Services.

- If you are having difficulty explaining your accommodations and how to implement them, seek assistance from a staff member in Accessibility Services.

Email Tips

- First complete your semester request so you can include that in your email and your professors can check their Accommodate page.
- Use a specific subject line such as “ENGL 102 Assignment” or “Accommodations Notice”
- Use a formal greeting such as “Dear Professor Smith” or “Hello Professor Jones”
- Avoid being too wordy or using emotional language
- Use a simple closing such as “Thank you” or “Sincerely”
- Sign with your name and possibly student ID and name, day, and time of class
- Allow adequate time for your professors to reply, typically 1-2 business days.

Email Templates

Introductory Email (Beginning of the Semester)

“Dear Professor _____,

My name is _____ and I will be enrolled in your English 101 course this semester. I am writing to let you know that I have accommodations through Accessibility Services and completed my semester request on Accommodate. Please let me know if you need any additional information to implement my accommodations.

Thank you,

Student Name

Student ID

Possible class date and time”

Introductory Email (During Semester)

“Dear Professor _____,

I am writing to let you know that I have recently been approved for accommodations through Accessibility Services. I have completed my semester request through Accommodate as well. Please let me know if you need any additional information to implement my accommodations for the remaining time of the semester.

Thank you,

Student Name”

Specifics for Testing and Exam Accommodations

If you have extended time on tests and exams, talk with your professor well in advance before the test or exam. If you do not do so, faculty may assume you are not planning on using your accommodations.

You as the student will need to complete the test room booking form on Accommodate **5 days in advance of your testing date**. This date should align with the date your class is taking the exam. Should you try to complete the form in less than 5 days of the testing date, Accommodate will show now availability. Your professors cannot submit any testing information until you have completed the test room booking form first.

If you have any questions about your accommodations and how to implement them, please contact Accessibility Services.

304-876-5122

Accessibility@shepherd.edu

Gardiner Hall, Lower Level, G-13

Monday through Friday

8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

<https://www.shepherd.edu/accessibility>