

Tips for Talking with Your Professors

Each semester, after you register your accommodations, the Office of Accessible Education and Student Support (OAESS) notifies your professors of your approved accommodations. It is up to you to develop, with each of your professors, a plan for how your accommodations will be implemented. While it is not required, you may also find it helpful to share specific information about your strengths, challenge areas, and how your disability may impact you academically. Advocating for yourself in this way can help your professors understand you better as a learner, make suggestions, and build stronger relationships with you.

Below are suggestions to consider when having a conversation with your professor about your disability and/or accommodation needs. Students are welcome to schedule an appointment with the OAESS for support in preparing for these conversations, if helpful.

Schedule a Time to Talk In-Person

- Email your professor to schedule an appointment, visit during office hours, or ask after class to arrange a meeting time to discuss your accommodations.
- In-person meetings will help facilitate an interactive discussion. Some students may find it helpful to share information by email first or share a written summary as a starting point during a meeting.
- Have this conversation at the beginning of the semester. Be proactive and don't wait until you are struggling or your academic performance is impacted, for example.

Prepare for the Meeting

- Read your Letter of Accommodations.
- Review the course syllabus thoroughly and note any questions or concerns you have so you can address them during the meeting.
- Practice describing how each accommodation is helpful to you and ideas you have for how to best implement them.
- Write an outline of what you want to share and bring it with you to the meeting.

During the Meeting

- It is up to you how much you want to share and you are not required to discuss your specific disability. You may choose to simply share that you are a student with a disability, describe your accommodation needs, and work with your professor to develop an implementation plan for the semester.
- If you decide to share specific disability information, you may want to consider the following:
 - How your disability may impact you both in and outside of the classroom
 - Your strengths and challenge areas as a student and learner
 - Any particular concerns you may have about the course

- Things that have been particularly helpful to you in past academic settings
- Ask your professor how they would like you to communicate if you are facing a challenge in the course, fall behind on an assignment, or your attendance may be impacted, for example.
- Develop a plan with your professor to implement your accommodations.
- Be ready to answer questions the professor may have regarding your accommodations.

Specifics for Testing and Exam Accommodations

- If you have extended time or another accommodation that pertains to quizzes/exams, talk with your professor well in advance of the first quiz or exam.
- If you are planning to take a quiz or exam in the Office of Student Affairs, you will need to communicate with your professor in advance of each exam so they know to send it ahead of time. Talk with them about how this will work.
- Ask about the format of exams in the course. If the professor plans to give a pop quiz, include a classroom component, or give a timed exam on Lyceum, for example, how will this work?

After the Meeting

- Keep the lines of communication open with your professor if any issues arise for you in the course.
- Follow-up with the OAESS if you have any concerns about implementation of your accommodations.