



GUIDE TO COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY WITH YOUR PROFESSORS

Communication with your professors is an essential part of implementing and managing your accommodations in college. Studies have consistently shown that successful students are those who can communicate effectively about their own learning needs. This guide is designed to help you to communicate successfully and advocate for yourself in the college environment.

Implementing Your Accommodation Plan

At the beginning of each semester you will need to complete the DSO Accommodation Request Form in MyKU to have your accommodations letters sent to your professors and advisors. You will also need to discuss your accommodation arrangements with your professors. This is a great time to meet your professors and present yourself as a responsible student. This initial discussion, whether it takes place in person or remotely is essential to implementing your accommodation plan and can go a long way to creating a positive rapport and enhancing your learning experience.

Finding an appropriate time and place to talk with your professor is important. Check your course syllabus for the time and location of your professor's office hours. If your class schedule conflicts with your professor's office hours, speak to your professor after class or send an email to arrange another mutually convenient time.

SAMPLE Accommodation Letter 

From: DSO@kutztown.edu
Sent: August 27, 20XX
To: avalanche@kutztown.edu
Subject: Accommodation Letter- ENG-010-101

Dear Dr. Avalanche,
Jordan Goldenbear (002XXXXXX) a student in SPT-010-010 English has requested that you receive this accommodation letter. Please retain a copy for your records.

Jordan is registered with the Disability Services Office. The following accommodations have been approved:

- Provide extended time on all tests and quizzes including online assessments and any other in-class timed assignments at 50%.
- Allow use of a computer, tablet, or braille notes in class for note taking
- Needs preferential seating

Additional Information:

Jordan would like you to know that they have ADHD and can be easily distracted.

Reasonable accommodations help to compensate for a disability and ensure equal access to the classroom, course, lecture, instructional materials, as well as an equal opportunity for students to demonstrate their mastery of the course content.

This student should reach out to you to discuss these accommodations. Please take some time to review the approved accommodations with the student and discuss how you will provide these accommodations in your class. Be sure to specify any parameters for accommodations that request "reasonable flexibility". For guidance on providing flexibility with attendance go to www.kutztown.edu/DSO/attendance. If note taking is an approved accommodation **and** your assistance is needed to acquire a note taker, the DSO will contact you via email.

Feel free to contact our office at DSO@kutztown.edu if you have any questions about this student's accommodations or need assistance with how to implement them in your class.

Disability Services Office
215 Stratton Administration Center
610-683-4108

Preparing to Meet With Your Professors

While there is no need to disclose the nature of your disability to your professors, understanding your disability and its impact on how you learn will provide the confidence to communicate your learning needs. Self-knowledge is the first step to self-advocacy.



You should know:

- What is my disability? (what is my diagnosis and how does it impact my learning?)
- What are my learning needs/challenges and how can my professors help me?
- What are my accommodations? (listed on your accommodation plan)
- What are my strengths and weaknesses? (memory, processing etc.)
- What are my strategies for learning and how do I plan to be actively involved in the process? (Think about what has worked for you in the past)

If you have difficulty explaining what your needs are and why you need accommodations, please seek assistance by scheduling an appointment with a staff member in the DSO.

Meeting Your Professors for the First Time

Sometimes starting a conversation about your accommodations can be the most difficult part of self-advocacy. When meeting your professors for the first time, a simple introduction works well.

“Hi, I’m _____ and I’m in your 10 am American History course.”

Remember, your professors have many students each semester. Telling them a little bit about yourself can break the ice and help your professor to get to know you more personally.

“I am a freshman and I’m majoring in Geology.”

When introducing the topic of your accommodations, be direct and to the point.

“I am registered with the Disability Services Office and would like to talk with you about my accommodations. You should have received an email outlining my approved accommodations.”



If your professors have questions about your accommodations that you cannot answer, they can contact the Disability Services Office for further explanation.

Tips for Engaging in Conversation with Your Professors

- Arrive or log-into your meeting on-time and with a positive attitude.
- Keep in mind that your professors are here to help you be successful.
- Take turns listening and talking (without interrupting).
- Make sure you understand what your professor has said; repeat it back in your own words.
“So what you are saying is _____.”
- Be flexible and cooperative. Work together to find solutions when there are problems.
- If you have further concerns, questions, or need more assistance, schedule a follow-up meeting with your professor.
- If you tried these strategies and are still not able to communicate your needs effectively with your professors, schedule an appointment with the DSO.

Telephone Etiquette



Telephone numbers for faculty members are published on your course syllabus and on the KU website.

Remember, faculty members may not be available to take calls or respond to messages immediately. In fact, it may take a few days. If your question cannot wait, try emailing or speaking with your professor in-person or online during their office hours.

When making a call or leaving a voice message be sure to:

- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Address your professor by title and last name. *“Hello, Professor Smith....”*
- Provide your full name and the name of the course in which you are enrolled.
- Make a clear statement of purpose.

“I would like to meet with you to talk about my accommodations, but I am not available during your scheduled office hours. Do you have any time on a Tuesday or Thursday after 1:00?”

- If you need to leave a message be sure to provide your telephone number, and suggest a good time for your professor to reach you. Keep in mind that your professors are generally going to be available to return calls during business hours. You may also consider following up with an email message.

Email Etiquette

Sending an email can be an effective and convenient way to communicate with your professors. However, there are a few considerations when deciding to email a professor.

Think about the purpose of your communication. Is it something personal or something that could be asked during class, when other students may benefit from the question and answer? Make sure you are not emailing about something you could perhaps find out by doing a little research. For example, avoid asking about office hours when they are already listed on your syllabus.

Tips for writing an effective email:

- Use a succinct, but specific subject line such as **“ENG 102 Assignment”**
- Use a formal greeting such as **“Dear Professor Jones”**
- Avoid being too wordy or using emotionally charged language
- Use a simple closing such as **“Thank you or Sincerely”**
- List your full name and a telephone number
- Allow adequate time for your professor to reply, typically 1-2 business days

Sample Email Messages

Introduction Email

Subject: HIS 101-01

Dear Professor Jones,
I will be enrolled in your 10 AM American History course this fall. I am writing to let you know that I am registered with the DSO and have been approved for several accommodations, one of which is enlarged print handouts (22 font). I will provide you with a letter from the DSO verifying my accommodations during the first week of classes. Please let me know if you need any additional information prior to the start of classes.

Thank you,
Julia Smith
610-XXX-XXXX

Testing Accommodation Reminder Email

Subject: PSY 011-01

Dear Professor Miller,
I am writing to make sure that my testing accommodations are in place for the second test that is scheduled for 8:00 am on Friday.

As we agreed, I will take the test in the DSO Testing Center during our class meeting. Please send a copy of the test to the Testing Center. Let me know if you need any additional information from me.

Thank you,
Julia Smith
610-XXX-XXXX

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