

Handbook for Reasonable Accommodations in the College Classroom



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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	1
Purpose of the Handbook.....	1
Legal Framework.....	1
 FOR STUDENTS.....	 2
Understanding Your Rights.....	2
Identifying Your Needs.....	5
Requesting Accommodations.....	7
Discussing Accommodations with Faculty.....	11
Implementing Accommodations.....	14
 FOR FACULTY.....	 17
Understanding Your Responsibilities.....	17
Receiving Accommodation Requests.....	19
Discussing Accommodations with Students.....	20
Implementing Accommodations.....	26
Resources and Support.....	32
 APPENDICES.....	 37

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Handbook

The purpose of having a handbook for faculty and students to discuss and implement reasonable accommodations in the classroom is to provide a clear, structured and accessible resource that facilitates understanding and communication while supporting both faculty and students throughout the process.

This handbook serves as a comprehensive guide, outlining the rights and responsibilities of both students and faculty, and offering practical steps for requesting, discussing and implementing accommodations. Having a centralized resource ensures that all parties are informed about the legal frameworks, best practices and available resources, thereby reducing misunderstandings and fostering a collaborative approach. Ultimately, it aims to create an inclusive educational environment where every student and faculty member can thrive.

Legal Framework

Understanding the relevant policies and laws that guide discussions of accommodations in the learning environment is crucial for fostering an inclusive and equitable educational experience. These regulations, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, provide a legal framework that ensures students with disabilities receive the necessary support to access and participate fully in academic programs. By being well-versed in these laws, both faculty and students can engage in informed and constructive dialogues about accommodations, ensuring that the rights of students are upheld and that appropriate measures are taken to meet their individual needs. This knowledge empowers all parties to work collaboratively towards creating a learning environment where every student can succeed.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The ADA is a comprehensive civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including education. Title II of the ADA applies to public colleges and universities, requiring them to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities to ensure equal access to educational programs and activities. This includes modifications to policies, practices and procedures, as well as the provision of auxiliary aids and services.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

Section 504 is a federal law that protects the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance, including colleges and universities. Under Section 504, institutions are required to provide reasonable accommodations to qualified students with disabilities, ensuring they have equal access to education. This law mandates that schools make necessary adjustments to academic requirements and provide appropriate support services to accommodate students' needs. Both the ADA and Section 504 emphasize the importance of creating an inclusive educational environment where students with disabilities can participate fully and equally. These laws serve as the foundation for the policies and practices that colleges and universities must implement to support students with disabilities, ensuring they have the same opportunities for success as their peers.

FOR STUDENTS

As a college student with disabilities, understanding your rights is essential to ensuring you receive the support and accommodations you need to succeed academically. Knowing your rights empowers you to advocate for yourself and navigate the educational system with confidence. It allows you to access the resources and accommodations that can make a significant difference in your learning experience. By being informed about the legal protections provided by laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, you can effectively communicate your needs to faculty and staff, ensuring your educational environment is inclusive and supportive. Self-advocacy is a crucial skill in this process, as it involves actively participating in discussions and planning for your own learning. By taking an active role, you can ensure that your specific needs are understood and met, and you can work collaboratively with faculty to create a learning environment that supports your success. Remember, you have the right to an equitable education, and understanding these rights, along with advocating for yourself, is the first step towards achieving your full potential.

Understanding Your Rights

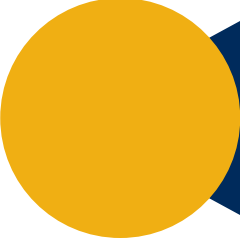
What are Reasonable Accommodations?

Reasonable accommodations are modifications or adjustments to the learning environment that enable students with disabilities to have equal access to education. These accommodations are designed to remove barriers that might prevent students from participating fully in academic activities. Examples of reasonable accommodations include extended time on exams, note-taking assistance, accessible classroom locations and the use of assistive technologies. The goal is to provide students with the necessary support to demonstrate their abilities and achieve their academic potential without altering the fundamental nature of the course or program.

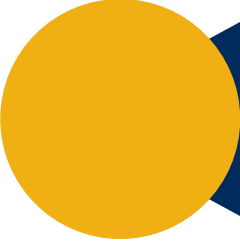


Determining when Accommodations are not Possible

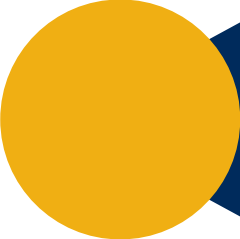
While the aim is to provide accommodations whenever feasible, there are instances where certain accommodations may not be possible. Determining when an accommodation is not reasonable involves considering several factors:



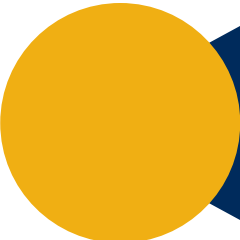
Fundamental Alteration: If the accommodation would fundamentally alter the nature of the course or program, it may not be considered reasonable. For example, if an accommodation would change the essential requirements or learning outcomes of a course, it might not be feasible.



Undue Burden: If providing the accommodation would impose an undue financial or administrative burden on the institution, it may not be possible. This determination is made on a case-by-case basis, considering the resources available to the institution.



Health and Safety: If the accommodation would pose a direct threat to the health or safety of others, it may not be reasonable. This includes situations where the accommodation could create significant risks that cannot be mitigated.



Availability of Alternatives: Sometimes, an alternative accommodation that achieves the same outcome may be available and more feasible. In such cases, the institution may propose an alternative solution that still meets the student's needs.

When an accommodation is deemed not possible, it is important for the institution to engage in an interactive process with the student to explore alternative solutions and ensure that the student's needs are addressed to the greatest extent possible. This collaborative approach helps maintain an inclusive and supportive learning environment.

Students with disabilities have specific rights under federal laws that ensure they receive the necessary accommodations to access and participate fully in their college education. Here are the key rights:

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Non-Discrimination:

Students are protected from discrimination based on their disability. This includes any actions that would unfairly disadvantage them in their educational pursuits.

Reasonable Accommodations:

Colleges and universities must provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. These accommodations are designed to remove barriers and ensure equal participation.

Equal Access: Students have the right to equal access to all educational programs and activities. This includes classrooms, libraries, labs and extracurricular activities.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE):

Students are entitled to a free appropriate public education, which includes the provision of necessary accommodations and services.

Individualized

Assessment: Schools must conduct individualized assessments to determine the specific needs of each student and provide appropriate accommodations.

Program Accessibility: All programs and activities must be accessible to students with disabilities, ensuring they can participate fully and equally.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Confidentiality: Students' disability-related information must be kept confidential. Schools can only share this information with individuals who have a legitimate educational interest.

Access to Records: Students have the right to access their educational records, including any documentation related to their accommodations.

Process for Requesting Accommodations

Documentation: Students may need to provide documentation of their disability to receive accommodations. This documentation helps the school understand the student's needs and determine appropriate accommodations.

Interactive Process: Schools are required to engage in an interactive process with students to determine the most effective accommodations. This involves open communication and collaboration between the student and the institution.

By understanding these rights, students can advocate for themselves and ensure they receive the support they need to succeed in their academic endeavors. It is important for students to be proactive in communicating their needs while working with their school's disability services office to access their entitled accommodations.

Identifying Your Needs

Identifying the right accommodations is a vital step for college students with disabilities to ensure they can fully participate in their classes and achieve their academic goals. Here's a guide to help students assess and identify the accommodations they may need:

Self-Assessment

- **Reflect on past experiences:** Consider what accommodations or supports have been helpful in the past, whether in high school or previous educational settings. Think about what worked well and what didn't.
- **Identify challenges:** Make a list of specific challenges you face in the classroom. This could include difficulties with notetaking, test-taking, accessing course materials or participating in discussions.
- **Consider different learning environments:** Reflect on how different types of classes (e.g., lectures, labs, online courses) might present unique challenges and what accommodations might be needed in each setting.

Gather Documentation

- **Medical and psychological evaluations:** Obtain current documentation from healthcare providers that outlines your disability and the functional limitations it imposes. This documentation is often required by the disability services office to determine appropriate accommodations.
- **Educational assessments:** If available, include any educational assessments or individualized education plans (IEPs) that provide insight into your learning needs and past accommodations.

Consult with Disability Services

- **Schedule a meeting:** Set up an appointment with your college's disability services office. They are equipped to help you identify and request the accommodations you need.
- **Discuss your needs:** Be prepared to discuss your specific challenges and the accommodations you believe will help. The disability services staff can provide guidance and suggest additional accommodations you might not have considered.
- **Interactive process:** Engage in an interactive process with the disability services office. This collaborative approach ensures that your needs are thoroughly understood and that the accommodations provided are tailored to your individual situation.

Explore Common Accommodations

- **Extended time on exams:** Useful for students who need additional time to process information or who experience anxiety during tests.
- **Note-taking assistance:** Options include receiving notes from a peer, using a note-taking app or recording lectures.
- **Assistive technology:** Tools such as screen readers, speech-to-text software and specialized keyboards can help students with various disabilities.
- **Alternative formats:** Requesting textbooks and other materials in accessible formats (e.g., Braille, large print, digital text) can be crucial for students with visual impairments.
- **Flexible attendance policies:** Flexibility in attendance requirements can be an important accommodation for students with chronic health conditions.

Trial and Adjustment

- **Monitor effectiveness:** Once accommodations are in place, monitor their effectiveness. Are they helping you overcome the challenges you identified? If not, consider what adjustments might be needed.
- **Communicate with faculty:** Keep an open line of communication with your professors. They can provide feedback on how the accommodations are working in their specific classes and suggest further adjustments if necessary.
- **Revisit and revise:** Periodically review your accommodations with the disability services office to ensure they continue to meet your needs as you progress through your academic program.

By following these steps, students can effectively assess and identify the accommodations they need to succeed in their college courses. Remember, the goal is to create an equitable learning environment where you can fully demonstrate your abilities and achieve your academic potential.



Requesting Accommodations

General Process: What to Expect

Requesting accommodations can seem daunting, but following a clear process can make it more manageable. Here's a step-by-step guide to help you through the process:

Gather Documentation

- **Obtain medical documentation:** Collect current documentation from your healthcare provider that outlines your disability and the functional limitations it imposes. This might include medical records, psychological evaluations or educational assessments.
- **Prepare educational records:** If applicable, gather any previous educational records, such as an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan, that detail past accommodations and supports.

Contact the Disability Services Office

- **Find contact information:** Locate the contact information for your college's disability services office. This can usually be found on the college's website.
- **Schedule an appointment:** Reach out to the office to schedule an appointment. This initial meeting is crucial for discussing your needs and starting the accommodation process.

Prepare for the Meeting

- **List your needs:** Make a list of the specific challenges you face in the classroom and the accommodations you believe will help. Be as detailed as possible.
- **Bring documentation:** Bring all relevant documentation to your meeting. This will help the disability services staff understand your needs and determine appropriate accommodations.

Attend the Meeting

- **Discuss your needs:** During the meeting, clearly explain your challenges and the accommodations you are requesting. Be open to discussing different options and solutions.
- **Interactive process:** Engage in an interactive process with the disability services staff. This collaborative approach ensures that your needs are thoroughly understood and that the accommodations provided are tailored to your individual situation.

Receive Accommodation Plan

- **Review the plan:** After your meeting, the disability services office will provide you with an accommodation plan. Review this plan carefully to ensure it includes all the accommodations you discussed.
- **Ask questions:** If you have any questions or concerns about the plan, don't hesitate to ask the disability services staff for clarification.

Communicate with Faculty

- **Share your plan:** Provide your professors with a copy of your accommodation plan. This can usually be done via email or in person.
- **Discuss implementation:** Arrange a time to discuss how the accommodations will be implemented in each of your classes. This ensures that both you and your professors are on the same page.

Monitor and Adjust

- **Track effectiveness:** Monitor how well the accommodations are working. Are they helping you overcome the challenges you identified?
- **Communicate issues:** If you encounter any issues or if the accommodations are not meeting your needs, communicate this to the disability services office and your professors.
- **Request adjustments:** Don't hesitate to request adjustments or additional accommodations if necessary. The goal is to ensure you have the support you need to succeed.

Follow Up

- **Regular check-ins:** Schedule regular check-ins with the disability services office to review your accommodations and make any necessary adjustments.
- **Stay informed:** Keep yourself informed about any changes in policies or procedures related to accommodations.

By following these steps, you can effectively request and implement the accommodations you need to thrive in your college courses. Remember, the disability services office is there to support you, so don't hesitate to reach out for assistance at any stage of the process.

West Virginia University Process: What to Expect

Requesting accommodations at West Virginia University (WVU) involves a clear process to ensure that students with disabilities receive the support they need. Here's how you can request accommodations:

Gather Documentation

- **Obtain medical documentation:** Collect current documentation from your healthcare provider that outlines your disability and the functional limitations it imposes. This might include medical records, psychological evaluations or educational assessments.
- **Prepare educational records:** If applicable, gather any previous educational records, such as an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan, that detail past accommodations and supports.

Submit an Application

- **Access the application:** [Visit the WVU Office of Student Accommodations website and locate the application for accommodations.](#)
- **Complete the application:** [Fill out the application form with your WVU ID number, WVU MIX email address, and the required documentation that supports your request.](#)
- **Submit the application:** Submit the completed application through the designated online portal or as instructed on the website.

Schedule an Intake Appointment

- **Contact the office:** After submitting your application, watch your WVU student email address for an email from the Office of Student Accommodations with a link that you can use to schedule your intake appointment.
- **Prepare for the meeting:** Make a list of the specific challenges you face in the classroom and the accommodations you believe will help. Be as detailed as possible.

Attend the Intake Appointment

- **Discuss your needs:** During the appointment, clearly explain your challenges and the accommodations you are requesting. Be open to discussing different options and solutions.
- **Interactive process:** Engage in an interactive process with the accommodation specialist. This collaborative approach ensures that your needs are thoroughly understood and that the accommodations provided are tailored to your individual situation.

Receive Accommodation Plan

- **Review the plan:** After your meeting, the Office of Student Accommodations will provide you with an accommodation plan. Review this plan carefully to ensure it includes all the accommodations you discussed.
- **Ask questions:** If you have any questions or concerns about the plan, don't hesitate to ask the accommodation specialist for clarification.

Communicate with Faculty

- **Share your plan:** Submit a Semester Request to the Office of Student Accommodations indicating which of your authorized accommodations are needed in each of your classes. The Office of Student Accommodations will distribute a notification of approved accommodations to your instructors. The Office of Student Accommodations does not recommend that students share their diagnosis or documentation of their disabilities directly with professors.
- **Discuss implementation:** Arrange a time to discuss how the accommodations will be implemented in each of your classes. This ensures that both you and your professors are on the same page.

Monitor and Adjust

- **Track effectiveness:** Monitor how well the accommodations are working. Are they helping you overcome the challenges you identified?
- **Communicate issues:** If you encounter any issues or if the accommodations are not meeting your needs, communicate this to the Office of Student Accommodations and your professors.
- **Request adjustments:** Don't hesitate to request adjustments or additional accommodations if necessary. The goal is to ensure you have the support you need to succeed.

Follow Up

- **Regular check-ins:** Schedule regular check-ins with the Office of Student Accommodations to review your accommodations and make any necessary adjustments.
- **Stay informed:** Keep yourself informed about any changes in policies or procedures related to accommodations.

By following these steps, you can effectively request and implement the accommodations you need to thrive in your courses at WVU. Remember, the Office of Student Accommodations is there to support you, so don't hesitate to reach out for assistance at any stage of the process.

Sample Request Letters and Emails

[Your Name]
[Your Address]
[City, State, ZIP Code]
[Email Address]
[Phone Number]
[Date]

[Disability Services Office]
[College/University Name]
[Address]
[City, State, ZIP Code]

Dear [Disability Services Office],

I am writing to formally request accommodations for my [specific disability] for the upcoming [semester/academic year]. I am currently enrolled in [course names or program] and believe that certain accommodations will greatly assist me in achieving my academic goals.

I have been diagnosed with [specific disability] by [healthcare provider's name], and I have attached the relevant documentation to support my request. Based on my condition, I am requesting the following accommodations:

1. [Accommodation 1] (e.g., extended time on exams)
2. [Accommodation 2] (e.g., note-taking assistance)
3. [Accommodation 3] (e.g., use of assistive technology)

These accommodations are essential for me to fully participate in my courses and demonstrate my abilities. I am committed to working collaboratively with my professors and the disability services office to ensure these accommodations are implemented effectively.

Please let me know if you require any additional information or documentation. I am available to meet at your earliest convenience to discuss my request further.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your support in helping me achieve my academic potential.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]
[Student ID Number]

Tips for Effective Communication with Faculty and Disability Services

Effective communication with faculty and disability services is key to ensuring that your accommodations are implemented smoothly and effectively. When communicating with faculty, it's important to be proactive by reaching out early in the semester to discuss your accommodation needs, giving them ample time to make necessary adjustments. Scheduling a face-to-face meeting or virtual appointment allows for a more personal and detailed conversation. Be clear and specific about your needs, providing examples of how the accommodations can be implemented in their class. Bringing a copy of your accommodation plan from the disability services office can guide the conversation. Be open to dialogue and prepared to discuss and possibly negotiate how accommodations will be implemented, maintaining flexibility and collaboration. Following up with a summary email after your meeting ensures both you and your professor are on the same page. Always approach the conversation with a positive and respectful attitude to build a constructive relationship with your professors.

When communicating with disability services, preparation is key. Gather all necessary documentation and make a list of the accommodations you believe you need before your meeting. Clearly articulate your challenges and how specific accommodations can help, providing as much detail as possible. Don't hesitate to ask questions about the accommodation process, available resources, and any concerns you might have. Engage actively in the interactive process to ensure your needs are thoroughly understood and addressed. Stay informed about any changes in policies or procedures related to accommodations to remain proactive in managing your needs. If you don't understand something, seek clarification to fully grasp your rights and the accommodations process. Regularly check in with disability services to review your accommodations and make any necessary adjustments, ensuring your needs continue to be met throughout your academic journey. By following these tips, you can effectively communicate your needs and ensure that your accommodations are implemented in a way that supports your academic success.

Discussing Accommodations with Faculty

Preparing for a meeting with your professor about accommodations is an important step to ensure the conversation is productive and that your needs are clearly communicated. Here's how you can prepare:

- 1. Review your accommodation plan:** Before the meeting, thoroughly review your accommodation plan provided by the disability services office. Make sure you understand each accommodation and how it applies to your specific needs.
- 2. Make a list of your needs:** Write down the specific accommodations you require for the class. Include any additional support you might need that is not covered in the plan. Be ready to explain how each accommodation will help you succeed in the course.
- 3. Gather documentation:** Bring a copy of your accommodation plan and any relevant documentation from the disability services office. This provides official support for your requests and helps guide the discussion.
- 4. Prepare talking points:** Outline the key points you want to discuss during the meeting. This might include explaining your disability, describing how it affects your learning, and sharing why certain accommodations are necessary. Having a clear agenda can help keep the conversation focused and efficient.

5. **Consider potential questions:** Think about any questions your professor might have and prepare your responses. This could include how the accommodations will be implemented, any adjustments that might be needed and how you will communicate if issues arise.
6. **Practice the conversation:** If you're nervous, practice what you want to say with a friend, family member or counselor. This can help you feel more confident and articulate during the actual meeting.
7. **Schedule the meeting:** Choose a time that works for both you and your professor, ideally during their office hours. Make sure to schedule the meeting well in advance to give your professor time to prepare.
8. **Bring a positive attitude:** Approach the meeting with a positive and collaborative mindset. Remember, your professor is there to help you succeed, and working together can create the best outcomes.

Using role-playing scenarios and conversation starters can be an effective way for students to prepare for discussions with their faculty about accommodations. This approach helps students practice what they want to say, anticipate potential questions, and build confidence. Here's how a student can use these techniques:

Role-Playing Scenarios

1. **Identify common situations:** Think about typical scenarios where you might need to discuss accommodations with your professor. For example, requesting extended time on exams, needing note-taking assistance or asking for flexibility with deadlines.
2. **Create scripts:** Write out scripts for these scenarios. Include both your part and potential responses from your professor. This helps you think through the conversation and prepare for different outcomes.
3. **Practice with a partner:** Find a friend, family member or counselor to role-play with you. Take turns playing the student and the professor. This practice can help you get comfortable with the conversation and receive feedback on your approach.
4. **Adjust based on feedback:** Use the feedback from your role-playing partner to refine your approach. Adjust your tone, body language, and responses to make the conversation more effective.



Conversation Starters

- 1. Introduction:** Start the conversation by introducing yourself and stating the purpose of the meeting. For example, “Hi Professor [Name], I’m [Your Name] from your [Course Name] class. I wanted to discuss my accommodation plan with you.”
- 2. Explain your needs:** Clearly explain your disability and the accommodations you need. For example, “I have a documented disability that affects my ability to take notes during lectures. I would like to discuss how we can implement note-taking assistance in your class.”
- 3. Provide documentation:** Offer your accommodation plan and any relevant documentation. For example, “Here is my accommodation plan from the disability services office, which outlines the accommodations I need.”
- 4. Discuss implementation:** Talk about how the accommodations can be implemented in the class. For example, “I was thinking that I could use a note-taking app during lectures. Would that be acceptable, or do you have any other suggestions?”
- 5. Ask for feedback:** Invite your professor to share their thoughts and ask any questions they might have. For example, “Do you have any questions about my accommodations or how we can best implement them in your class?”
- 6. Express gratitude:** End the conversation by thanking your professor for their time and support. For example, “Thank you for taking the time to discuss this with me. I appreciate your support in helping me succeed in your class.”

Example Role-Playing Scenario

Student: “Hi Professor Smith, I’m Alex from your Biology 101 class. I wanted to discuss my accommodation plan with you.”

Professor: “Of course, Alex. What accommodations do you need?”

Student: “I have a documented disability that affects my ability to take notes during lectures. I would like to discuss how we can implement note-taking assistance in your class. Here is my accommodation plan from the disability services office.”

Professor: “I see. How do you usually handle note-taking?”

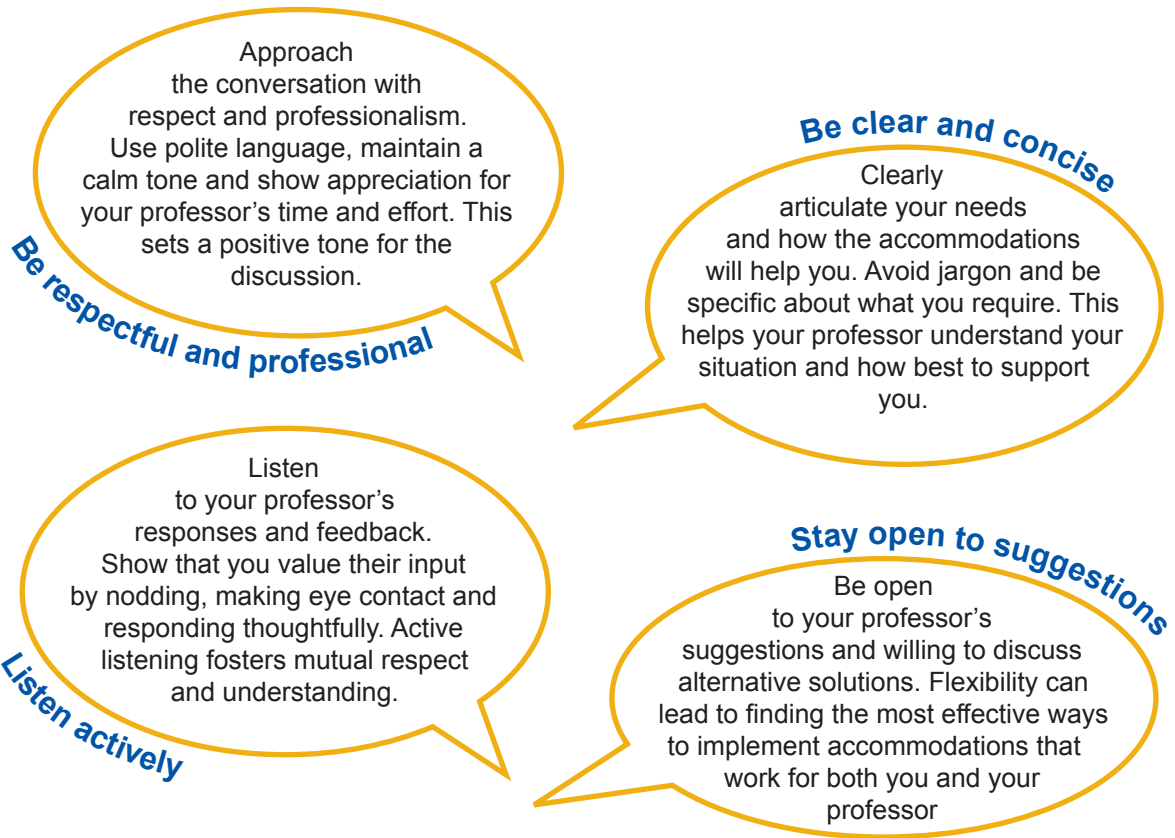
Student: “I was thinking that I could use a note-taking app during lectures. Would that be acceptable, or do you have any other suggestions?”

Professor: “That sounds reasonable. Let’s try that and see how it works. If you encounter any issues, let me know, and we can adjust as needed.”

Student: “Thank you, Professor Smith. I appreciate your support in helping me succeed in your class.”

Tips for Maintaining a Positive and Productive Dialogue

Maintaining a positive and productive dialogue with faculty about accommodations is crucial for ensuring that your needs are met effectively. Here are some strategies to help you achieve this:



Example Conversation

Student: "Hi Professor Jones, I wanted to check in about the note-taking accommodation we discussed earlier. It's been really helpful, but I've noticed that I sometimes miss key points during fast-paced lectures. Do you have any suggestions on how we might address this?"

Professor: "I'm glad to hear the accommodation is helping. Perhaps we could arrange for you to record the lectures as well, so you can review them later. Would that work for you?"

Student: "That sounds like a great idea. Thank you for the suggestion, Professor Jones. I appreciate your support."

Implementing Accommodations

The following points are steps to one can make to ensure accommodations are implemented effectively:

1. **Understand your accommodations:**
 - o **Example:** If you have extended time for exams, know exactly how much extra time you are entitled to and any specific conditions (e.g., separate room).
2. **Communicate early:**
 - o **Example:** At the start of the semester, email your professors with your accommodation letter and request a meeting to discuss how your needs can be met in their class.
3. **Regular check-ins:**
 - o **Example:** Schedule periodic meetings with your professors or the disability services office to review how the accommodations are working and address any issues.
4. **Document everything:**
 - o **Example:** Keep a record of all communications with faculty and the disability services office, including emails and meeting notes.
5. **Seek feedback:**
 - o **Example:** Ask your professors for feedback on how the accommodations are working from their perspective and if they have any suggestions for improvement.

Approaching Faculty for Modifications

1. Be specific and clear:

o **Example:** “Professor Smith, I noticed that the extended time for exams is helping, but I am still struggling with the noise in the testing center. Could we arrange for a quieter space?”

2. Provide context:

o **Example:** “I have a hearing impairment, and the background noise in the classroom makes it difficult for me to follow lectures. Could we explore options like using a microphone or providing lecture notes in advance?”

3. Suggest solutions:

o **Example:** “I find it challenging to keep up with the fast pace of the lectures. Could we record the sessions so I can review them later?”

4. Be respectful and professional:

o **Example:** “I appreciate your support with my accommodations. I wanted to discuss a few adjustments that could further help me succeed in your class.”

5. Follow up:

o **Example:** After discussing modifications, send a follow-up email summarizing the agreed-upon changes and thanking the professor for their assistance

Additional Tips

- **Use campus resources:** Utilize the disability services office for support and advocacy.
- **Peer support:** Connect with other students who have similar accommodations for advice and support.
- **Stay informed:** Keep up to date with your rights and any changes in accommodation policies.

By being proactive and maintaining open communication, you can ensure that your accommodations are effectively implemented and smoothly make any necessary adjustments.



Steps to Take if Accommodations are not Being Met

- 1. Document the issues:**
 - o **Example:** Keep a detailed record of instances where accommodations were not provided as agreed. Note dates, times and specific issues.
- 2. Communicate with the professor:**
 - o **Example:** Politely remind the professor of the agreed-upon accommodations. For instance, “Professor Johnson, I noticed that I did not receive the extended time for the last exam. Could we discuss how to ensure this is implemented for future tests?”
- 3. Contact disability services:**
 - o **Example:** Reach out to the disability services office to report the issue and seek their assistance in resolving it. They can mediate between the student and the faculty.
- 4. Request a meeting:**
 - o **Example:** Arrange a meeting with the professor and a representative from the disability services office to discuss the issues and find a solution.
- 5. Seek support from peers:**
 - o **Example:** Connect with other students who have similar accommodations to share experiences and strategies for addressing issues.
- 6. Escalate if necessary:**
 - o **Example:** If the issue persists, escalate the matter to higher authorities, such as the department head or dean, with the support of the disability services office.

Example Scenario

Scenario: A student with ADHD is not receiving the agreed-upon accommodation of extended time for exams.

Steps Taken:

- 1. Document:** The student notes each instance where the extended time was not provided.
- 2. Communicate:** The student emails the professor, explaining the issue and requesting a meeting.
- 3. Meeting:** During the meeting, the student, professor and a representative from the disability services office discuss the problem and agree on a solution.
- 4. Follow-up:** The student follows up with an email summarizing the agreed-upon solution and thanks the professor and the representative for their assistance.

Additional Tips

- **Stay Calm and Professional:** Approach the situation calmly and professionally to foster a cooperative environment.
- **Know Your Rights:** Be aware of your rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other relevant laws.
- **Use Campus Resources:** Utilize all available resources, including counseling services, if the situation is causing significant stress.

By taking these steps, a student can effectively address issues with their accommodations and ensure they receive the support they need to succeed academically.

FOR FACULTY

Understanding Your Responsibilities

Faculty members have specific responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act to ensure that students with disabilities receive appropriate accommodations. Here is an overview of these responsibilities:

- 1. Provide equal access:**
 - o Faculty must ensure that students with disabilities have equal access to all course materials and activities. This includes making necessary adjustments to teaching methods, materials and assessments.
- 2. Maintain confidentiality:**
 - o Faculty must keep all information regarding a student's disability and accommodations confidential. This includes not disclosing this information to other students or unauthorized personnel¹.
- 3. Implement approved accommodations:**
 - o Faculty are required to implement accommodations that have been approved by the disability services office. These accommodations are designed to provide equal access without altering the fundamental nature of the course².
- 4. Include accommodation statements in syllabi:**
 - o Faculty should include a statement in their course syllabi informing students about the process for requesting accommodations. This helps ensure that students are aware of their rights and the resources available to them³.
- 5. Respond to accommodation requests promptly:**
 - o Faculty should respond to accommodation requests in a timely manner to ensure that students receive the necessary support without delay³.
- 6. Collaborate with disability services:**
 - o Faculty should work closely with the disability services office to ensure that accommodations are implemented effectively. This may involve attending training sessions or seeking advice on best practices².
- 7. Maintain academic standards:**
 - o While providing accommodations, faculty must also maintain the integrity of academic standards. Accommodations should not compromise the essential requirements of a course¹.

Visit the [Learning Disabilities Association of America](#) to learn more about maintaining confidentiality and academic standards.

Visit [Oregon State University's Disability Access Services](#) to learn more about implementing approved accommodations and collaborating with disability services.

Visit the [Harvard University Faculty Guide to Managing Academic Accommodations and Requests](#) to learn more about including accommodation requests in syllabi and responding to requests promptly.

Example Scenario

Scenario: A student with a visual impairment requires course materials in an accessible format.

Faculty Actions:

1. **Provide equal access:** Ensure all course materials are available in accessible formats, such as Braille or digital text.
2. **Maintain confidentiality:** Keep the student's disability information private.
3. **Implement approved accommodations:** Work with the disability services office to provide the necessary materials.
4. **Include accommodation statements:** Inform students in the syllabus about the process for requesting accommodations.
5. **Respond promptly:** Address the student's needs as soon as the request is made.
6. **Collaborate:** Seek guidance from the disability services office on the best way to provide accessible materials.
7. **Maintain standards:** Ensure that the accommodations do not alter the fundamental requirements of the course.

By adhering to these responsibilities, faculty can create an inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students.



Receiving Accommodation Requests

Faculty members play an important role in ensuring that students with disabilities receive the accommodations they need. When a student requests accommodations, faculty should acknowledge the request promptly and arrange a private meeting to discuss the student's specific needs. Reviewing the accommodation letter provided by the office of accessibility is essential to understand the approved accommodations and any specific instructions. When responding to accommodation requests from the office of accessibility, faculty should thoroughly review the request to understand the specific needs and requirements. If there are any questions or concerns, consulting with the office of accessibility for clarification and guidance is important.

Maintaining confidentiality and sensitivity is crucial for faculty when working with students to implement accommodations. Here are some tips to help ensure these standards are met:

Tips for Maintaining Confidentiality

- 1. Keep information private:**
 - o **Example:** Do not discuss a student's disability or accommodations with other students or unauthorized personnel. Ensure that any conversations about accommodations are held in private settings.
- 2. Secure documentation:**
 - o **Example:** Store all accommodation letters and related documents in a secure location, such as a locked drawer or a password-protected digital file.
- 3. Use discreet communication:**
 - o **Example:** When discussing accommodations with a student, use discreet methods such as private emails or one-on-one meetings rather than public announcements or group emails.
- 4. Limit access:**
 - o **Example:** Only share information about a student's accommodations with individuals who need to know, such as teaching assistants or exam proctors, and ensure they understand the importance of confidentiality.

Tips for Maintaining Sensitivity

- 1. Respect student privacy:**
 - o **Example:** Avoid asking intrusive questions about a student's disability. Focus on understanding their needs and how you can support them.
- 2. Be empathetic:**
 - o **Example:** Show understanding and empathy when discussing accommodations. Acknowledge the student's challenges and express your willingness to help.
- 3. Use inclusive language:**
 - o **Example:** Use person-first language (e.g., "student with a disability" rather than "disabled student") and avoid language that may be perceived as stigmatizing.
- 4. Be flexible and open-minded:**
 - o **Example:** Be open to adjusting your teaching methods or course requirements to better accommodate the student's needs. Flexibility can make a significant difference in their academic experience.
- 5. Provide clear information:**
 - o **Example:** Clearly explain how accommodations will be implemented and what the student can expect. This helps to reduce anxiety and ensures that the student feels supported.
- 6. Seek feedback:**
 - o **Example:** Regularly ask the student for feedback on how the accommodations are working and if any adjustments are needed. This shows that you are committed to their success.

By following these tips, faculty can create a supportive and respectful environment for students with disabilities, ensuring that their accommodations are implemented effectively and sensitively.

Discussing Accommodations with Students

Best Practices

Discussing accommodations with college students requires sensitivity, confidentiality and clear communication. Here are some best practices for faculty:

1. **Create a welcoming environment:**
 - o **Example:** At the beginning of the semester, include a statement in your syllabus inviting students to discuss their accommodation needs. This sets a positive tone and encourages students to approach you.
2. **Schedule private meetings:**
 - o **Example:** Arrange to meet with students privately, either during office hours or at a mutually convenient time, to discuss their accommodations. This ensures confidentiality and allows for an open, honest conversation.
3. **Listen actively:**
 - o **Example:** Give the student your full attention during the meeting. Listen to their needs and concerns without interrupting and ask clarifying questions to ensure you understand their requirements.
4. **Review the accommodation letter:**
 - o **Example:** Go over the accommodation letter provided by the office of accessibility with the student. Discuss how each accommodation will be implemented in your course and address any questions they may have.
5. **Be empathetic and supportive:**
 - o **Example:** Show empathy and support by acknowledging the student's challenges and expressing your commitment to helping them succeed. Use inclusive language and avoid making assumptions about their abilities.
6. **Provide clear information:**
 - o **Example:** Clearly explain how the accommodations will be implemented and what the student can expect. For instance, if a student needs extended time for exams, discuss the logistics and confirm the arrangements in writing.
7. **Maintain confidentiality:**
 - o **Example:** Ensure that all discussions about accommodations are kept confidential. Do not disclose the student's disability or accommodations to other students or unauthorized personnel.
8. **Follow up regularly:**
 - o **Example:** Check in with the student periodically to see how the accommodations are working and if any adjustments are needed. This shows that you are committed to their ongoing success.
9. **Collaborate with the office of accessibility:**
 - o **Example:** Work closely with the office of accessibility to ensure that accommodations are implemented effectively. Seek their guidance if you encounter any challenges or have questions.
10. **Document the process:**
 - o **Example:** Keep records of all communications and steps taken to implement the accommodations. This documentation can be useful if any issues arise and helps ensure a clear and organized approach.

What if the Student is Hesitant to Discuss?

If a student is hesitant to request accommodations, there are several strategies that can help them feel more comfortable and supported in doing so:

Encouragement and Support

1. **Normalize the process:**
 - o **Example:** Reassure the student that requesting accommodations is a common and accepted practice. Many students use accommodations to help them succeed academically.
2. **Provide information:**
 - o **Example:** Share information about the accommodations process, including how to request them and what types of support are available. This can help demystify the process and reduce anxiety.
3. **Highlight confidentiality:**
 - o **Example:** Emphasize that all information regarding their disability and accommodations will be kept confidential. This can alleviate concerns about privacy.
4. **Offer to assist:**
 - o **Example:** Offer to help the student contact the office of accessibility or to accompany them to their first meeting. This can provide moral support and make the process less intimidating.

Building Self-Advocacy Skills

1. **Encourage self-advocacy:**
 - o **Example:** Help the student develop self-advocacy skills by role-playing conversations with faculty or office of disability services staff. This can build their confidence in requesting accommodations.
2. **Provide resources:**
 - o **Example:** Share resources such as guides or workshops on self-advocacy and accommodations. Many universities offer these through their disability services office.

Example Scenario

Scenario: A student with anxiety is hesitant to request accommodations for extended test time.

Steps Taken:

1. **Normalize:** Reassure the student that many students use accommodations and that it is a standard part of the educational process.
2. **Inform:** Provide detailed information about how to request accommodations and what to expect.
3. **Confidentiality:** Emphasize that their information will be kept confidential.
4. **Assist:** Offer to help them contact the disability services office or accompany them to their first meeting.
5. **Self-Advocacy:** Encourage them to practice self-advocacy skills and provide resources to support this.
6. **Understand:** Have a conversation to understand their specific concerns and address them directly.
7. **Reframe:** Help them see accommodations as a right that ensures equal access to education.

Addressing Specific Concerns

1. **Understand their hesitation:**
 - o **Example:** Have a private conversation with the student to understand their specific concerns about requesting accommodations. This can help tailor your support to their needs.
2. **Reframe the conversation:**
 - o **Example:** Emphasize that accommodations are a right, not a privilege, and that they are designed to provide equal access to education. This can help shift the student's perspective.

Common Challenges Experienced when Discussing Accommodations

Discussing accommodations with college students can present several challenges for faculty. Here are some common ones:

Common Challenges

- 1. Lack of knowledge:**
 - o **Example:** Faculty may not be fully aware of the legal requirements under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. This can lead to uncertainty about how to properly implement accommodations¹.
- 2. Concerns about academic integrity:**
 - o **Example:** Some faculty worry that providing accommodations might compromise academic standards or give certain students an unfair advantage¹.
- 3. Perceived stigma:**
 - o **Example:** Faculty might be concerned about how accommodations will be perceived by other students, potentially leading to stigma or resentment².
- 4. Inconsistent implementation:**
 - o **Example:** Ensuring that accommodations are consistently applied across different courses and instructors can be challenging, leading to variability in student experiences².
- 5. Communication barriers:**
 - o **Example:** Faculty may struggle with how to discuss accommodations sensitively and effectively, especially if they are not trained in handling such conversations².
- 6. Student hesitation:**
 - o **Example:** Students may be hesitant to disclose their disabilities or request accommodations due to fear of stigma or not wanting to be perceived as different².
- 7. Documentation requirements:**
 - o **Example:** Obtaining and verifying the necessary documentation for accommodations can be a time-consuming process, and students may face delays or difficulties in providing the required paperwork³.
- 8. Lack of resources:**
 - o **Example:** Some institutions may lack sufficient resources or support systems to help faculty effectively implement accommodations⁴.

View [Higher Education and the ADA: An ADA Knowledge Translation Center Research Brief](#) to learn more about common challenges experienced when discussing accommodations.

Addressing These Challenges

1. Training and education:

o Providing faculty with training on legal requirements, best practices and effective communication strategies can help alleviate many of these challenges.

2. Clear policies and procedures:

o Establishing clear, consistent policies and procedures for requesting and implementing accommodations can help ensure uniformity and reduce confusion.

3. Support from disability services:

o Encouraging collaboration between faculty and the office of accessibility can provide additional support and resources for implementing accommodations.

4. Promoting an inclusive culture:

o Fostering an inclusive and supportive campus culture can help reduce stigma and encourage students to seek the accommodations they need.

Steps to Address Unreasonable Accommodation Requests

If a student requests an accommodation that seems unreasonable or unfair, it's important to handle the situation thoughtfully and in accordance with legal guidelines. Here are some steps faculty can take:

1. Review the request:

o **Example:** Carefully review the accommodation request to understand its specifics.

[Determine if it fundamentally alters the course or program standards, threatens safety, or creates an undue financial or administrative burden.](#)

2. Consult with the office of accessibility:

o **Example:** Reach out to the disability services office to discuss the request. They can provide guidance on whether the accommodation is reasonable and suggest alternative solutions if necessary.

3. Communicate with the student:

o **Example:** Arrange a private meeting with the student to discuss the request. Explain your concerns and the reasons why the accommodation may not be feasible. Be empathetic and supportive during this conversation.

4. Explore alternative solutions:

o **Example:** Work with the student and the disability services office to identify alternative accommodations that can meet the student's needs without compromising course standards or creating undue burdens.

5. Document the process:

o **Example:** Keep detailed records of the accommodation request, your communications with the student, and any consultations with the disability services office. This documentation can be useful if any disputes arise.

Example Scenario

Scenario: A student requests to retake exams with accommodations that were not requested or approved prior to the first administration of the exam.

Steps Taken:

1. **Review:** Determine that retroactive accommodations are generally not considered reasonable.
2. **Consult:** Discuss the request with the disability services office to confirm this understanding.
3. **Communicate:** Meet with the student to explain why retroactive accommodations are not feasible and discuss the importance of requesting accommodations in advance.
4. **Explore alternatives:** Offer to provide accommodations for future exams and discuss any other support the student might need.
5. **Document:** Record the details of the request, the consultation with the disability services office, and the outcome of the meeting with the student.

Additional Considerations

- **Legal compliance:** Ensure that any decisions made are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.
- **Fairness and equity:** Strive to balance the needs of the student with the integrity of the course and fairness to other students.
- **Ongoing support:** Continue to support the student by providing reasonable accommodations and encouraging them to request accommodations in a timely manner.

Approaching Challenging Accommodation Requests

Example 1: Request for Retroactive Accommodations

Scenario: A student requests to retake exams with accommodations that were not requested or approved prior to the first administration of the exam.

Steps Taken:

1. **Review:** Determine that retroactive accommodations are generally not considered reasonable.
2. **Consult:** Discuss the request with the disability services office to confirm this understanding.
3. **Communicate:** Meet with the student to explain why retroactive accommodations are not feasible and discuss the importance of requesting accommodations in advance.
4. **Explore alternatives:** Offer to provide accommodations for future exams and discuss any other support the student might need.
5. **Document:** Record the details of the request, the consultation with the disability services office, and the outcome of the meeting with the student.

Example 2: Request for a Fundamental Alteration

Scenario: A student requests an accommodation that would fundamentally alter the nature of the course, such as eliminating a core requirement.

Steps Taken:

1. **Review:** Assess whether the requested accommodation would fundamentally alter the course requirements.
2. **Consult:** Seek guidance from the disability services office and relevant academic departments to evaluate the request.
3. **Communicate:** Explain to the student why the requested accommodation cannot be granted because it would alter the essential nature of the course.
4. **Explore alternatives:** Work with the student and the disability services office to identify alternative accommodations that can meet the student's needs without compromising the course standards.
5. **Document:** Keep detailed records of the request, consultations and the final decision.

Example 3: Request for an Unreasonable Financial Burden

Scenario: A student requests an accommodation that would impose an undue financial burden on the institution, such as highly specialized equipment.

Steps Taken:

1. **Review:** Evaluate the financial impact of the requested accommodation.
2. **Consult:** Discuss the request with the disability services office and the institution's administration to assess the feasibility.
3. **Communicate:** Explain to the student why the requested accommodation cannot be provided due to financial constraints.
4. **Explore alternatives:** Identify and propose alternative accommodations that are more financially feasible but still meet the student's needs.
5. **Document:** Record the details of the request, the financial assessment and the outcome of the discussions.

Example 4: Request for a Non-Essential Function

Scenario: A student requests an accommodation that involves modifying a non-essential function of the course, such as changing the format of a non-essential assignment.

Steps Taken:

1. **Review:** Determine whether the requested accommodation affects an essential or non-essential function of the course.
2. **Consult:** Seek input from the disability services office and relevant academic departments.
3. **Communicate:** Discuss with the student how the accommodation can be implemented without affecting the essential functions of the course.
4. **Implement:** Make the necessary adjustments to accommodate the student's request.
5. **Document:** Keep records of the request, consultations and the implementation process.

Implementing Accommodations

It is important to check in with the student to ensure the accommodations are working effectively while being open to making adjustments if needed. Keeping records of all communications and steps taken to implement the accommodations can be useful if any issues arise. Providing feedback to the disability services office about any challenges or suggestions for improving the accommodation process is also beneficial.

For example, if a student with a learning disability requires lecture notes in advance, the faculty should respond to the student's request promptly and arrange a meeting. After reviewing the accommodation letter to understand the requirement, the faculty should discuss with the student how and when the notes will be provided. Ensuring that lecture notes are prepared and shared with the student before each class, regularly checking in with the student to ensure the notes are helpful, and making any necessary adjustments are important steps. Keeping a record of the accommodation process and any communications with the student and the disability services office helps maintain a clear and organized approach. By following these steps, faculty can effectively respond to accommodation requests and support students in achieving their academic goals.

Practical Tips for Implementing Various Types of Accommodations.

Implementing accommodations effectively in the college classroom can greatly enhance the learning experience for students with disabilities. Here are some practical tips for various types of accommodations:

Presentation Accommodations

- 1. Use multiple media:**
 - o **Example:** Incorporate videos, audiobooks and digital presentations to complement traditional print materials. This can help students with visual or auditory processing difficulties.
- 2. Provide lecture notes in advance:**
 - o **Example:** Share lecture notes or outlines before class to help students with learning disabilities or attention issues follow along more easily.
- 3. Allow recording of lectures:**
 - o **Example:** Permit students to record lectures so they can review the material at their own pace.

Response Accommodations

- 1. Flexible response formats:**
 - o **Example:** Allow students to respond to assignments and tests in various formats, such as orally, typed or using assistive technology like speech-to-text software.
- 2. Use of scribes:**
 - o **Example:** Provide a scribe for students who have difficulty writing, enabling them to dictate their responses.
- 3. Assistive devices:**
 - o **Example:** Allow the use of calculators, spell-checkers or other assistive devices during exams and assignments.

Timing Accommodations

1. **Extended time:**
 - o **Example:** Provide additional time for exams and assignments to students who need it due to processing speed limitations or other disabilities.
2. **Breaks during exams:**
 - o **Example:** Allow students to take breaks during exams to manage fatigue or anxiety.

Setting Accommodations

1. **Quiet testing environments:**
 - o **Example:** Arrange for students to take exams in a quiet, distraction-free environment.
2. **Preferential seating:**
 - o **Example:** Seat students near the front of the classroom or away from distractions to help them focus better.

Organizational Accommodations

1. **Clear instructions and deadlines:**
 - o **Example:** Provide clear, written instructions and deadlines for assignments to help students with organizational challenges.
2. **Use of planners and checklists:**
 - o **Example:** Encourage students to use planners or checklists to keep track of assignments and deadlines.

Collaboration and Support

1. **Work with disability services:**
 - o **Example:** Collaborate with the disability services office to ensure accommodations are appropriate and effectively implemented.
2. **Regular check-ins:**
 - o **Example:** Schedule regular check-ins with students to discuss how the accommodations are working and make any necessary adjustments.
3. **Professional development:**
 - o **Example:** Attend training sessions on accommodations and inclusive teaching practices to stay informed and improve your skills.

Visit [Education Advance](#) to learn more about practical tips for implementing various types of accommodations.

How to Adjust Teaching Methods and Materials

It is vital to adjust teaching methods and materials to accommodate students with disabilities in order to create an inclusive learning environment. Here are some strategies faculty can use:

1. Understand the Accommodations

- Review documentation: Familiarize yourself with the student's accommodation plan provided by the disability services office.
- Communicate: Have a conversation with the student to understand their specific needs and preferences.

2. Modify Teaching Methods

- Flexible teaching styles: Use a mix of lectures, discussions and hands-on activities to cater to different learning styles.
- Recorded lectures: Provide recordings of lectures for students who may need to review the material multiple times.
- Assistive technology: Incorporate tools like screen readers, speech-to-text software and captioned videos.

3. Adapt Materials

- Accessible formats: Ensure all materials are available in accessible formats (e.g., large print, Braille, digital text).
- Clear and concise: Use clear, concise language and avoid overly complex sentences.
- Visual aids: Use diagrams, charts and other visual aids to support understanding.

4. Assessment Adjustments

- Extended time: Allow extra time for exams and assignments.
- Alternative assessments: Offer different types of assessments (e.g., oral presentations, projects) instead of traditional exams.
- Quiet testing environment: Provide a distraction-free environment for taking tests.

5. Classroom Environment

- Seating arrangements: Ensure the classroom layout is accessible and allows for easy movement.
- Note-taking assistance: Arrange for note-takers or provide lecture notes in advance.

6. Continuous Support

- Regular check-ins: Schedule regular meetings with the student to discuss their progress and any additional needs.
- Feedback: Encourage feedback from the student to continuously improve the accommodations.

Monitoring and Adjusting Accommodations as Needed

Monitoring and adjusting accommodations for students with disabilities is an ongoing process that requires active communication and flexibility. Faculty should begin the semester with an initial meeting to discuss the student's needs and how the accommodations will be implemented. Regular check-ins, such as bi-weekly or monthly meetings, are essential to discuss the effectiveness of the accommodations and make any necessary adjustments. For example, if a student with ADHD finds it challenging to focus during long lectures, the faculty might break the lecture into shorter segments with interactive activities in between.

Gathering feedback from the student is crucial. Encouraging them to share their experiences and any challenges they face helps to better understand their needs. Additionally, using peer and self-assessments can provide further insights into the student's progress and comfort level. Monitoring academic performance by tracking grades, participation and overall performance can help identify areas where the student might be struggling. If a student with dyslexia is having difficulty with written exams, offering alternative assessments like oral presentations or projects can be beneficial. Collaboration with the disability services office is vital. Faculty should consult with them to ensure that the accommodations are appropriate and effective. Attending workshops or training sessions on inclusive teaching practices and accommodation strategies can also be helpful. Flexibility and responsiveness are key; faculty should be willing to modify teaching methods and materials based on the student's feedback and performance. For instance, if a student with a visual impairment is struggling with standard print materials, providing digital text that can be read with screen readers might be more effective.

Documenting any changes made to the accommodations and the reasons for those changes is important for maintaining a clear record. At the end of the semester, reviewing the effectiveness of the accommodations and reflecting on what worked well and what could be improved can provide valuable insights for future adjustments. Fostering an inclusive environment where all students feel comfortable sharing their needs and experiences is essential. Encouraging peer support and collaboration can create a supportive learning community. By maintaining open communication, being flexible and actively seeking feedback, faculty can ensure that accommodations are effective and that students receive the support they need to succeed.

Examples of Alternative Assessments

Here are some examples of alternative assessments that can be used to accommodate different learning needs and styles:

1. Oral presentations

- **Example:** Instead of a written exam, students can present their understanding of a topic through a speech or presentation. This can be particularly helpful for students who excel in verbal communication.

2. Projects and portfolios

- **Example:** Students can compile a portfolio of their work over the semester, showcasing their learning and progress. This method allows for a more comprehensive assessment of their skills and knowledge.

3. Creative assignments

- **Example:** Allow students to express their understanding through creative means such as artwork, videos or music compositions. This can be beneficial for students with strong creative skills.

4. Practical demonstrations

- **Example:** In subjects like science or engineering, students can demonstrate their knowledge through hands-on experiments or practical tasks. This approach can be more engaging and reflective of real-world applications.

5. Group projects

- **Example:** Assign group projects where students collaborate to solve a problem or create a product. This not only assesses their knowledge but also their teamwork and communication skills.

6. Reflective journals

- **Example:** Students can keep a journal where they reflect on their learning experiences, challenges, and growth throughout the course. This can provide insights into their thought processes and personal development.

7. Case studies and simulations

- **Example:** Use case studies or simulations to assess students' ability to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world scenarios. This method is particularly useful in fields like business, law and healthcare.

8. Peer reviews

- **Example:** Incorporate peer review sessions where students evaluate each other's work. This can help develop critical thinking and constructive feedback skills.

9. Take-home exams

- **Example:** Provide take-home exams that allow students to work at their own pace and use resources to complete the assessment. This can reduce test anxiety and better reflect their understanding.

10. Online quizzes and interactive assessments

- **Example:** Use online platforms to create interactive quizzes and assessments that can include multimedia elements like videos and interactive diagrams. This can make the assessment process more engaging and accessible.

There are several valuable resources available for designing inclusive assessments:

1. **IncludED: A Guide to Designing Inclusive Assessments:** This guide from the Centre for Teaching and Learning at Oxford University provides comprehensive strategies for creating assessments that minimize the likelihood of students being excluded or disadvantaged. It emphasizes the importance of proactive assessment design and offers various types of summative assessment tasks to promote inclusivity.
2. **Inclusive Teaching Guide from the University of Leeds:** This guide offers practical advice on designing assessments that align with institutional strategies for inclusivity. It includes case studies, good practices and sector-wide reports on inclusive assessment, student success and belonging. The guide also suggests offering assessment options within a module to cater to different student needs and learning styles.
3. **National Center on Accessible Educational Materials:** This resource provides foundational knowledge on digital accessibility and testing accommodations. It includes tools like the NCEO's Accommodations Toolkit, which helps educators stay updated on research and state policies related to inclusive assessments.



Resources and Support

1. Disability Access Office (DAO) guides:

- o Many universities have a Disability Access Office that provides detailed guides for both students and faculty on managing and implementing accommodations. For example, the [Harvard University Faculty Guide to Managing Academic Accommodations and Requests](#) outlines how to handle accommodation requests and implement common accommodations.

2. Center for Accessibility and Disability Resources:

- o [Saint Louis University's Center for Accessibility and Disability Resources](#) provides resources for faculty, staff and teaching assistants to support students with disabilities. They offer consultations and guidance on implementing accommodations effectively.

3. Reasonable Accommodations Guide:

- o Collin College offers a [Reasonable Accommodations Guide](#) that includes a directory of resources and a glossary of disability-related terminology.

4. Faculty Focus articles:

- o [Faculty Focus](#) publishes articles on strategies for accommodating students with disabilities in higher education. These articles provide practical tips and insights for creating an inclusive learning environment.

5. CUNY Faculty Guide:

- o The City University of New York (CUNY) has an updated [Faculty Guide to Teaching Students with Disabilities](#) that covers various types of disabilities, recommended accommodations, and helpful suggestions for meeting students' needs.

Tips for Using These Resources

- **Review guides and policies:** Familiarize yourself with your institution's specific guides and policies on accommodations.
- **Consult with disability services:** Schedule consultations with the disability services office to discuss any challenges or questions.
- **Stay informed:** Keep up to date with best practices and legal requirements related to accommodations.
- **Communicate openly:** Maintain open communication with faculty and disability services to ensure accommodations are implemented effectively.

These resources can provide valuable information and support to help ensure that accommodations are properly implemented and that students receive the support they need to succeed academically.

Professional Development Opportunities on this Topic

Here are some professional development opportunities for faculty to learn more about the accommodation process and inclusive teaching practices:

1. Fundamentals of Disability Accommodations and Inclusive Course Design

Provider: University of Minnesota

Description: This online course comprises three modules: Understanding Disability and Reasonable Accommodations, Providing Reasonable Accommodations for Disability, and Inclusive Course Design. [It is highly interactive and accessible, allowing faculty to proceed at their own pace.](#)

2. Americans with Disabilities Act: Part 2

Provider: University of Minnesota Online

Description: This online lecture discusses reasonable accommodations and the reasonable accommodation process under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). [It includes a case study to illustrate the application of the ADA.](#)

3. Promoting Inclusive Teaching Among College Faculty

Provider: University of Connecticut

Description: This framework for disability service providers includes tools like self-assessments, checklists and guidelines to help faculty create accessible class materials and assessments. [It follows a “plan, deliver, assess” structure to promote inclusive teaching.](#)

4. Higher Education and the ADA

Provider: ADA National Network

Description: [Higher Education and the ADA: An ADA Knowledge Translation Center Research Brief](#) provides insights into accessibility challenges in higher education and offers training on accommodations for students with disabilities in various learning environments.

5. Workshops and training sessions

Local Institutions: Many universities offer workshops and training sessions on inclusive teaching practices and accommodations. Check with your institution’s disability services office or teaching and learning center for available opportunities.

6. Online courses and webinars

Various Providers: Platforms like Coursera, edX and LinkedIn Learning offer courses and webinars on inclusive education, accessibility and universal design for learning.

7. Conferences and Seminars

Professional organizations: Attend conferences and seminars hosted by organizations such as the [Association on Higher Education and Disability \(AHEAD\)](#) and the [National Center for College Students with Disabilities \(NCCSD\)](#).

Professional Development Opportunities at WVU

West Virginia University (WVU) offers several professional development opportunities for faculty to learn about individuals with disabilities, student disabilities and the learning process:

1. Faculty and Leadership Development

Description: WVU's Office of the Provost provides various trainings and workshops throughout the academic year. [These sessions focus on current trends in higher education including diversity, equity and inclusion, and offer tools and resources to help faculty grow as professionals.](#)

2. Center for Excellence in Disabilities (CED) Badges

Description: The CED offers micro-credentials or badges in Disability Studies for faculty and staff. [These badges cover topics such as disability inclusion, identity and advocacy, and are designed to increase skills for addressing stigma and challenges associated with disabilities.](#)

3. Trainings at the CED

Description: The CED provides several self-paced trainings for professionals, students, families, and caregivers. [These trainings cover a range of topics related to disabilities and inclusive practices.](#)

4. Learning and development training opportunities

Description: WVU's Talent and Culture department offers a variety of learning and development opportunities, including courses on understanding higher education and leadership essentials. [These courses can help faculty better understand the needs of students with disabilities and how to support them effectively.](#)

5. National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity (NCFDD)

Description: As a member of NCFDD, WVU faculty have access to free on-demand webinars, mentoring, discussion forums, and workshops. [These resources include topics on diversity and inclusion, which are crucial for understanding and supporting students with disabilities.](#)



Scenarios

Here are the scenarios with both positive and negative outcomes:

Scenario 1: Extended Time on Exams

Student: Alex has ADHD and finds it challenging to complete exams within the standard time limit.

Faculty member: Professor Smith

Interaction:

- **Alex:** “Professor Smith, I have ADHD and need extended time for exams. Can we discuss how to arrange this?”
- **Professor Smith:** “Of course, Alex. Let’s coordinate with the disability services office to ensure you get the extra time you need. We can arrange for you to take the exam in a quiet room with the additional time.”

Positive outcome:

- **Alex:** “Thank you, Professor Smith. The extra time really helped me focus and complete the exam without feeling rushed.”
- **Professor Smith:** “I’m glad to hear that, Alex. If you need any further adjustments, please let me know.”

Negative outcome:

- **Alex:** “Professor Smith, I wasn’t given the extra time during the exam. It was really stressful.”
- **Professor Smith:** “I’m sorry to hear that, Alex. There must have been a miscommunication. Let’s meet with the disability services office to ensure this doesn’t happen again.”

Scenario 2: Note-Taking Assistance

Student: Jamie has a visual impairment and struggles with taking notes during lectures.

Faculty member: Dr. Lee

Interaction:

- **Jamie:** “Dr. Lee, I have a visual impairment that makes it difficult to take notes. Could I receive assistance with this?”
- **Dr. Lee:** “Absolutely, Jamie. We can arrange for a peer note-taker or use a note-taking app. I’ll also provide you with lecture slides in advance to help you follow along.”

Positive outcome:

- **Jamie:** “The peer note-taker and advance slides have been really helpful. I’m able to keep up with the lectures much better now.”
- **Dr. Lee:** “That’s great to hear, Jamie. If you need any more support, just let me know.”

Negative outcome:

- **Jamie:** “Dr. Lee, the peer note-taker hasn’t been reliable, and I’m still struggling to keep up.”
- **Dr. Lee:** “I’m sorry to hear that, Jamie. Let’s find a more consistent solution, perhaps a different note-taker or a better app.”

Scenario 3: Flexible Attendance Policy

Student: Taylor has a chronic health condition that sometimes prevents them from attending class.

Faculty member: Professor Johnson

Interaction:

- **Taylor:** “Professor Johnson, I have a chronic health condition that occasionally affects my attendance. Can we discuss a flexible attendance policy?”
- **Professor Johnson:** “Certainly, Taylor. Let’s work together to create a plan that allows you to keep up with the coursework even when you can’t attend class. We can use recorded lectures and online discussions to ensure you don’t fall behind.”

Positive outcome:

- **Taylor:** “The flexible attendance policy and recorded lectures have been a lifesaver. I’m able to stay on track with the course.”
- **Professor Johnson:** “I’m glad it’s working for you, Taylor. Keep me updated if you need any further adjustments.”

Negative outcome:

- **Taylor:** “Professor Johnson, the recorded lectures aren’t always available, and I’m falling behind.”
- **Professor Johnson:** “I’m sorry to hear that, Taylor. Let’s address this issue immediately and ensure the recordings are consistently available.”

Scenario 4: Assistive Technology

Student: Sam has dyslexia and benefits from using speech-to-text software for assignments.

Faculty member: Dr. Martinez

Interaction:

- **Sam:** “Dr. Martinez, I have dyslexia and find it helpful to use speech-to-text software for my assignments. Can I use this technology in your class?”
- **Dr. Martinez:** “Of course, Sam. You can use speech-to-text software for your assignments. If you need any additional support or resources, please let me know, and we can work together to ensure you have what you need.”

Positive outcome:

- **Sam:** “The speech-to-text software has made a huge difference in my ability to complete assignments on time.”
- **Dr. Martinez:** “I’m happy to hear that, Sam. If there’s anything else you need, don’t hesitate to ask.”

Negative outcome:

- **Sam:** “Dr. Martinez, the software isn’t compatible with some of the assignment formats, and I’m struggling to keep up.”
- **Dr. Martinez:** “I’m sorry to hear that, Sam. Let’s work with the IT department to find a solution that works for all your assignments.”

APPENDICES

FAQ: Providing the Best Accommodations for College Students

1. What are accommodations and why are they important?

Accommodations are adjustments or modifications provided to students with disabilities to ensure they have equal access to education. They are important because they help level the playing field, allowing students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills without being hindered by their disabilities.

2. How do I know what accommodations a student needs?

Students typically receive an accommodation plan from the disability services office. This plan outlines the specific accommodations they are entitled to. It's important to review this plan and have a conversation with the student to understand their individual needs and preferences.

3. How can I make my teaching materials more accessible?

- Use accessible formats: Provide materials in various formats such as large print, Braille, and digital text.
- Clear and concise language: Use straightforward language and avoid overly complex sentences.
- Visual aids: Incorporate diagrams, charts and other visual aids to support understanding.

4. What are some examples of alternative assessments?

- Oral presentations: Allow students to present their understanding verbally.
- Projects and portfolios: Use comprehensive projects or portfolios to assess learning.
- Creative assignments: Encourage creative expressions like artwork or videos.
- Practical demonstrations: Use hands-on tasks to demonstrate knowledge.
- Group projects: Facilitate collaborative projects to assess teamwork and understanding.

5. How can I monitor and adjust accommodations throughout the semester?

- Regular check-ins: Schedule periodic meetings with the student to discuss the effectiveness of the accommodations.
- Gather feedback: Encourage the student to share their experiences and challenges.
- Track performance: Monitor the student's academic performance and adjust accommodations as needed.
- Collaborate with disability services: Work closely with the disability services office for guidance and support.

FAQ: Providing the Best Accommodations for College Students (continued)**6. What should I do if an accommodation is not working?**

If an accommodation is not effective, discuss alternative solutions with the student and the disability services office. Be flexible and open to trying different approaches to find what works best for the student.

7. How can I create an inclusive classroom environment?

- Encourage inclusivity: Promote a classroom culture where all students feel comfortable sharing their needs.
- Peer support: Foster a supportive learning community through peer collaboration.
- Accessible classroom layout: Ensure the classroom is physically accessible and allows for easy movement.

8. Are there resources available for designing inclusive assessments?

Yes, there are several resources available:

- IncludED: A Guide to Designing Inclusive Assessments from Oxford University.
- Inclusive Teaching Guide from the University of Leeds.
- National Center on Accessible Educational Materials for digital accessibility and testing accommodations.

9. How can I stay informed about best practices in inclusive teaching?

- Attend workshops: Participate in training sessions on inclusive teaching practices.
- Consult with experts: Work with the disability services office and other experts in the field.
- Stay updated: Read current research and case studies on inclusive education.

Inclusive and Accommodating Class Checklist for Faculty

1. Course Planning
 - **Review accommodation plans:** Obtain and review accommodation plans from the disability services office.
 - **Syllabus statement:** Include a statement in the syllabus about your commitment to inclusivity and accommodations.
 - **Flexible deadlines:** Consider flexible deadlines for assignments and exams.
2. Classroom Environment
 - **Accessible layout:** Ensure the classroom layout is accessible for students with mobility issues.
 - **Seating arrangements:** Provide seating options that accommodate various needs (e.g., close to the front, near exits).
 - **Assistive technology:** Ensure that any necessary assistive technology is available and functioning.
3. Teaching Methods
 - **Varied instructional methods:** Use a mix of lectures, discussions, group work and hands-on activities.
 - **Recorded lectures:** Provide recordings of lectures for students who need to review the material multiple times.
 - **Interactive activities:** Incorporate interactive activities to engage different learning styles.
4. Learning Materials
 - **Accessible formats:** Provide materials in accessible formats (e.g., digital text, large print, Braille).
 - **Clear language:** Use clear and concise language in all written and spoken communication.
 - **Visual aids:** Use diagrams, charts and other visual aids to support understanding.
5. Assessments
 - **Alternative assessments:** Offer various types of assessments (e.g., oral presentations, projects, take-home exams).
 - **Extended time:** Allow extra time for exams and assignments as needed.
 - **Quiet testing environment:** Provide a distraction-free environment for taking tests.
6. Communication
 - **Initial meeting:** Meet with students at the beginning of the semester to discuss their needs and accommodations.
 - **Regular check-ins:** Schedule periodic check-ins to discuss the effectiveness of accommodations.
 - **Feedback mechanism:** Encourage students to provide feedback on the accommodations and teaching methods.
7. Collaboration
 - **Work with disability services:** Collaborate with the disability services office for guidance and support.
 - **Peer support:** Encourage peer support and collaboration among students.
8. Continuous Improvement
 - **Professional development:** Attend workshops and training sessions on inclusive teaching practices.
 - **Reflect and adjust:** Regularly reflect on the effectiveness of your teaching methods and accommodations, making adjustments as needed.

Postcard Handout: Identifying Reasonable Accommodations

Identifying Reasonable Accommodations

Creating an inclusive classroom starts with understanding and implementing reasonable accommodations. Here's how to identify them:

Steps to Identify Reasonable Accommodations

1. Review documentation

- o Obtain and review the student's accommodation plan from the disability services office.

2. Understand the student's needs

- o Meet with the student to discuss their specific needs and preferences.

3. Assess the classroom environment

- o Ensure the physical layout and resources are accessible.

4. Evaluate teaching methods

- o Use a variety of instructional methods to cater to different learning styles.

5. Adapt materials

- o Provide learning materials in accessible formats (e.g., digital text, large print).

6. Modify assessments

- o Offer alternative assessments (e.g., oral presentations, projects).

Questions to Ask

1. Is the accommodation necessary?

- o Does the student's disability documentation support the need for this accommodation?

2. Is the accommodation effective?

- o Will this accommodation help the student access the curriculum and demonstrate their knowledge?

3. Is the accommodation reasonable?

- o Does the accommodation fundamentally alter the nature of the course or impose an undue burden?

4. Is the accommodation feasible?

- o Can the accommodation be implemented with the available resources and within the course structure?

5. Is the accommodation inclusive?

- o Does the accommodation promote an inclusive learning environment for all students?

Examples of Reasonable Accommodations

- **Extended time:** Allowing extra time for exams and assignments.
- **Note-taking assistance:** Providing lecture notes or arranging for a note-taker.
- **Alternative formats:** Offering materials in accessible formats like Braille or digital text.
- **Quiet testing environment:** Providing a distraction-free space for exams.

Remember, the goal is to ensure all students have equal access to education. If you have any questions or need further assistance, contact your disability services office.

Examples of Unreasonable Accommodations

1. Eliminating essential course requirements

- o Example: Allowing a student to skip a core component of the course, such as a lab in a science class, which is essential for understanding the subject matter¹.

2. Lowering academic standards

- o Example: Reducing the grading criteria or academic expectations specifically for a student with disabilities, which compromises the integrity of the course¹.

3. Providing unlimited extensions

- o Example: Granting indefinite extensions on assignments or exams, which can disrupt the course schedule and affect other students¹.

4. Changing the nature of the course

- o Example: Modifying the course content to the extent that it no longer meets the learning objectives or accreditation standards².

5. Excessive financial or administrative burden

- o Example: Implementing accommodations that require significant financial investment or administrative resources beyond what is reasonable for the institution to provide².

6. Disrupting the learning environment

- o Example: Accommodations that significantly disrupt the learning environment or place an undue burden on other students or faculty members².

7. Providing more paid leave

- o Example: Offering more paid leave to a student with disabilities than is provided to other students, which can create inequity¹.

Visit [Bloomberg Law](#) and [Miller Cohen, PLC](#) to learn more about unreasonable accommodations.

Questions to Determine Reasonableness

1. Does the accommodation eliminate an essential course requirement?
2. Does it lower academic standards or expectations?
3. Does it impose an undue financial or administrative burden on the institution?
4. Does it fundamentally alter the nature of the course or program?
5. Does it disrupt the learning environment or place an undue burden on others?

By considering these questions, faculty can better determine whether an accommodation is reasonable and ensure that all students receive fair and equitable support.

Handling requests for unreasonable accommodations requires a thoughtful and respectful approach. Here are some steps you can take:

1. Understand the Request

- **Listen carefully:** Ensure you fully understand the student's request and the reasons behind it.
- **Review documentation:** Check the student's accommodation plan and any relevant documentation from the disability services office.

2. Assess the Reasonableness

- **Evaluate impact:** Consider whether the accommodation would fundamentally alter the nature of the course, lower academic standards or impose an undue burden on the institution.
- **Consult guidelines:** Refer to institutional policies and guidelines on reasonable accommodations.

3. Communicate Clearly

- **Explain limitations:** Politely explain why the requested accommodation is not feasible, citing specific reasons such as academic integrity, course requirements or institutional constraints.
- **Offer alternatives:** Suggest alternative accommodations that could meet the student's needs without compromising the course's essential elements.

4. Collaborate with Disability Services

- **Seek guidance:** Work with the disability services office to explore possible solutions and ensure that your response aligns with institutional policies.
- **Document the process:** Keep a record of the request, your evaluation and any communications with the student and disability services.

5. Maintain a Supportive Attitude

- **Be empathetic:** Acknowledge the student's challenges and express your commitment to finding a workable solution.
- **Encourage dialogue:** Keep the lines of communication open, encouraging the student to share their concerns and feedback.

Example Scenario:

Request: A student asks for unlimited extensions on assignments due to a chronic health condition.

Response: "I understand that managing your health condition can be challenging, and I want to support you in any way I can. However, granting unlimited extensions could disrupt the course schedule and affect other students. Let's work together to find a solution that accommodates your needs while maintaining the course's integrity. Perhaps we can set up a flexible deadline plan or provide additional support during particularly difficult times."

Difference Between Service Animals and Emotional Support Animals

Service animals are specifically trained to perform tasks for individuals with disabilities. These tasks can include guiding individuals who are blind, alerting those who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair or fetching items for someone with mobility issues. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), only dogs (and in some cases, miniature horses) can be considered service animals.

Emotional Support Animals (ESAs), on the other hand, provide comfort and emotional support to individuals with mental health conditions. They do not require specialized training to perform specific tasks. ESAs can be any type of animal and are primarily recognized under the Fair Housing Act (FHA) and the Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA), which allow them in housing and on flights, respectively.

Common Challenges with Animals in School or Work

1. **Allergies and Phobias:** Some individuals may have severe allergies or phobias related to animals, which can create conflicts in shared spaces.
2. **Distractions: Animals**, especially those not well-trained, can become distractions in educational or professional settings.
3. **Behavioral Issues:** Not all animals are suited for the environments of schools or workplaces, leading to potential behavioral problems.
4. **Legal and Policy Confusion:** There can be misunderstandings about the rights and responsibilities related to service animals and ESAs, leading to disputes and legal challenges.

Visit the [ADA National Network](#) to learn more about service animals and emotional support animals.

Visit the [Job Accommodation Network](#) to learn more about service animal work accommodations and challenges.

Questions You Can Ask About the Animal

When determining if an animal is a service animal, you are legally allowed to ask only two questions:

1. Is the animal required because of a disability?
2. [What work or task has the animal been trained to perform?](#)

For emotional support animals, you can request documentation from a licensed mental health professional stating the need for the animal.

How to Accommodate an Animal in the College Classroom

1. **Documentation:** Require students to provide documentation from a licensed mental health professional or a doctor, verifying the need for the animal.
2. **Clear Policies:** Establish clear policies regarding the presence of animals, including behavior expectations and areas where animals are allowed.
3. **Training and Behavior:** Ensure that the animal is well-behaved and does not disrupt the learning environment.
4. **Allergy and Phobia Management:** Make accommodations for students or staff with allergies or phobias, such as seating arrangements or separate spaces.
5. **Regular Check-ins:** Have regular check-ins with the student to ensure that the presence of the animal continues to be beneficial and does not cause issues.

Visit [Wellness Wag](#) to learn more about animal accommodations in the college classroom.



All printed materials are available in alternate formats upon request.
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