

## **Disclosing Disabilities to Professors**

### **When to disclose a disability to the professor**

- If you have disability accommodations through the Office of Disability, you will be asked to disclose the fact that you have a disability that requires accommodations at the beginning of the semester. You do not need to disclose the nature of your disability, only the nature of your accommodation and how it will impact your ability to participate in the course.
- If you do not have accommodations through the office of disability, you can disclose your disability if and when you deem it necessary and appropriate. Disclosing at the beginning of the semester is likely beneficial so the professor can be aware immediately of any necessary accommodations.
- Accommodations are not retroactive, meaning that you must disclose your accommodations before being able to utilize them.

### **Benefits and drawbacks of disclosing your disability to your professor**

- Benefits: Disclosing your disability allows you to get the accommodations you need to succeed as a student. It also may prevent academic issues and miscommunication down the line because of the disability.
- Drawbacks: Disclosing your disability may put you in a vulnerable position where you share something deeply personal to a figure of authority. Remember that when disclosing your disability, you do not need to include any details about your disability, only how it affects your academic coursework.

### **How to disclose disability (language to use, provide a template)**

- If you have an accommodation through the Office of Disability Resources, you will need to request accommodations through the portal. Once you do so, a memorandum will be sent to your professor that includes the accommodations you have requested.
- You should send an email to your professor following up on the memorandum that includes each accommodation, how it relates to the course, and offer to meet if they have any questions or would like to discuss further.
- You do not have to disclose any details of your disability, only how your accommodation will affect your coursework. You can use language such as “I have a chronic condition...” or “My ongoing medical situation causes....” or “My disability results in...”

## Email Template for Disclosing Disabilities

Dear Professor \_\_\_\_\_,

You should have received an email from the Office of Disability Resources alerting you that I have accommodations. I wanted to follow up and address the nature of the accommodations and how they will specifically apply to our \_\_\_\_\_ class together.

I have cc'd \_\_\_\_\_, who is my primary advisor in the Office of Disability Resources. They can help facilitate accommodations and answer any questions you might have.

Accommodations:

*Include here the title of your accommodation and how it may affect your coursework.  
For example:*

- Flexible attendance: I have a chronic medical condition that is unpredictable and will occasionally result in me missing class. Please let me know what amount of attendance flexibility is appropriate for this course. Additionally, please let me know what procedure you would like me to follow when I need to miss class, including details about making up work and attendance grades.

For these accommodations, I would be happy to discuss how they might affect my experiences in the course and go over the details and parameters of the accommodations as well as any concerns you may have. I am happy to discuss by email or set up a time to meet if a more extensive conversation is required.

Thank you,

\_\_\_\_\_

## References:

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1026808.pdf>

<https://www.cmu.edu/disability-resources/students/discussing-accommodations.html>