

Student Guide for Communicating with Instructors

Once a student is approved for academic accommodations, CADR will send an instructor notification email which will include the list of approved accommodations. The student is responsible for starting conversations with their instructors about utilizing their accommodations in the course. CADR only sends the instructor notification email when a student is initially registered for academic accommodations.

At the beginning of each semester, CADR will send a general email to all instructors about accommodations in their courses. However, at the start of each semester, students are responsible for contacting their instructors about their accommodations if they wish to use them in the course.

This guide was created to assist students when it comes to discussing accommodations with instructors about their accommodations. Below is a list of FAQs regarding communication with instructors.

When does CADR recommend students reach out to their instructors about using accommodations in a course?

CADR recommends that students contact their instructors as soon as possible, either a) once they are approved for academic accommodations or b) at the start of a new semester. By starting these conversations early in the semester, this creates a better opportunity for the student and the instructor to understand:

- a) how the accommodation relates to the course;
- b) how to effectively implement an accommodation into the course; and
- c) how to have open communication when challenges occur with an accommodation.

While some accommodations are more straightforward and are easier to implement/use in a course, some take more time to talk through and develop with an instructor. On the instructor's side, there may be several students with different accommodations in the course. When students initiate the conversation about accommodations for the course, the instructor will then know what needs to occur and how the course may impact the student's individual experience.

How do I start the conversation about accommodations with my instructor?

The initial conversation doesn't have to be extensive. CADR suggests that students begin reaching out to instructors with an email or speaking with them after class or during office hours. Please see our email template on our [Student Resources webpage](#), under "Communicating with Instructors."

If I don't want to use the accommodations in the course, do I need to have a conversation with my instructor?

If you do not feel the need to use your accommodations in a course, you are not required to communicate that with your instructor. However, CADR recommends that you remain transparent with your instructor about your intentions with your accommodations so they are aware that you will be not utilizing accommodations in the course.

Do I have to disclose my disability or diagnosis to my instructor?

A student's confidential information, including their disability or diagnosis, is protected and does not need to be disclosed when speaking with an instructor. It is up to the student's discretion if they want to disclose that information. Instructors should not ask a student what their disability or diagnosis is. If an instructor suggests

that your diagnosis or disability be shared, please reach out to a CADR staff member or accessibility_disability@slu.edu with your concerns.

If a student is comfortable sharing their disability or diagnosis with an instructor, they are welcome to do so.

What happens if I face challenges with an instructor surrounding the use my accommodations in the course?

If you are requesting to use your accommodations in a course and an instructor creates a challenge or refusal to the use of your accommodations in the course, please reach out to CADR. A CADR staff member can also be a part of these conversations if necessary. If you want to have a CADR staff member present in a conversation with your instructor, please notify CADR with plenty of notice (at least two days).

How does the communication piece relate to flexible attendance and/or flexible deadlines?

Please see our student guide for flexible attendance and flexible deadlines accommodations on our [Student Resources webpage](#), under “Communicating with Instructors.”

Do you have any tips or suggestions for effective communication?

1. Maintain open and frequent communication.

Once communication is established, whether through in-person appointments or through emails, it is helpful to keep communication open and consistent. Diagnoses/disabilities can fluctuate with symptomatic impact, which may require students to keep instructors updated on the impact it may have on the course. This may require discussions about the course, attendance, assignments, etc., so when communication is established, it is easier to create a line of communication when these instances occur. Plus, if a relationship is established at the beginning, instructors may be more aware of their responsibilities when it comes to accommodations.

2. Be aware of reasonability.

Some accommodations may be more straight-forward than others. However, some accommodations may include more in-depth conversations on what they might look like or how they might be implemented. In any scenario with accommodations, the question of reasonability may come into play. If an accommodation fundamentally alters the nature of the course or the objectives of the course, it may not be considered reasonable and an alternative option should be discussed.

3. Review and reevaluate.

Accommodations will be implemented differently from course to course, semester to semester. Thus, at the start of each semester:

- a. Think about your courses and whether you need to use the accommodation in all of them.
- b. Reflect on your previous semester:
 - What accommodations were helpful? Can they be applied to these courses similarly? If not, what might be different? These are questions that can be used in your conversations with your instructor.
 - If my accommodations are not supporting my disability/diagnosis and my needs, should I review them and seek adjustments?
- c. If you need to speak with a staff member in CADR about your accommodations, please reach out! We are here to discuss your challenges, concerns, and adjustments needed.