

Talking to your professors about your accommodations

The SDS office will notify each faculty member of your approved classroom accommodations via email a few days before class. If you finalize your accommodations after the first day of the term, the notification will be sent out within a few days of your approval to receive accommodations. The Faculty Notification Form (FNF) will include your name and the classroom accommodations you qualify for. The notice sent from SDS does not include information about your diagnosis or the reason why you are working with SDS.

After SDS sends the FNF to your faculty member, we encourage you to also contact your faculty member directly to make sure they received the email and create an opportunity to make sure you and professor are on the same page. A meeting between the two of you will help your professor have a chance to ask you questions or provide clarification about how your accommodations can work in their classroom.

Below are some optional tools for students who would like guidance on how to either email their professors or have an in person conversation with their professors. You can use the template as is or customize it how you wish. *Thank you to one of our students for sharing these templates she uses to communicate to her faculty members.*

If you ever have a faculty member who does not seem to be implementing your accommodations, or you could use more support with the conversations, please contact SDS at sds@stmarys-ca.edu or (925) 631-4358.

EMAIL TEMPLATES

Template 1: Email to use when you are following up with your Professor after SDS sends the FNF and you want to disclose your disability to your Professor:

Dear Professor _____,

I hope this message finds you well. My name is _____ and I am in your _____ class on (day)_____, (day)_____, (day)_____ at (time)_____.

I am writing to inform you that I will be utilizing SDS services for the duration of the semester in your class. The accommodation(s) I will be using is _____ and you should have received an email from the SDS office confirming the approval of the accommodations.

If you have further questions about my accommodation(s), I am willing to speak to you about it. I am comfortable speaking about my disability, however I would like to remind you that speaking about my disability puts me in a vulnerable place, so I ask that you approach this topic with compassion.

Here is some information about my disability that may aid your understanding of my accommodations or aid my success in your course. This is a list of what I feel comfortable sharing about my disability, thank you for respecting my privacy.

Strengths I bring to the classroom:

Background on the disability:

Possible symptoms:

Possible events that may occur:

What you need to know:

How you can help:

(please feel free to add anything else)

If you have any further questions about my accommodations, please let me know and we can talk via email or during office hours.

Best,

(Student Name)

=====

Template 2: Email when student does not want to disclose their disability:

Dear Professor _____,

I hope this message finds you well. My name is _____ and I am in your _____ class on (day)_____, (day)_____, (day)_____ at (time)_____.

I am writing to inform you that I am utilizing SDS services during the duration of the semester in your class. The accommodation I will be using is (are) _____ and you should have received an email from the SDS office confirming the approval of the accommodations.

I am not comfortable speaking about my disability and I kindly ask that you respect my right to privacy regarding specific disclosure, but if you have any further questions about my accommodations, please let me know and we can talk via email or during office hours.

Best,
(Student Name)

=====

FACE TO FACE CONVERSATIONS

(To set up the meeting): Professor xxxx, I was wondering if we could meet after class or during your office hours so that I can talk to you about my accommodations?

(At meeting):

Professor xxx, thank you for meeting with me. I wanted to make sure you received the email from SDS about my accommodations? (If no, but you received a copy of it from SDS, pull up your copy of the email to show them and forward a copy).

Use the following questions to guide your conversation as applicable:

- Do you have any questions for me about my approved accommodations?
- I wanted to make sure I talked to you about _____ because I'm wondering how we will make sure I receive that accommodation in your class?
- How many tests are there in your class? Do you anticipate anything we need to work through to make sure my testing accommodation goes smoothly?
- What is your attendance policy? (If you are approved for the attendance consideration, remind them what you qualify for).
- If I have to be late or miss a class, how do you prefer I let you know?
- How long after tests do you typically give feedback to your students?
- What resources do you think I should use to be successful in your class?
- I am worried about _____ in this class, do you have any suggestions for me on how I should approach that?