

## Tips for Communicating with Professors

### HOW DO I TELL PROFESSORS ABOUT MY ACCOMMODATIONS & DISABILITY-RELATED ISSUES?

First, good communication begins with you! Understand what you want to communicate to the professor and prepare to share some of your background!

1. Familiarize yourself with the LRC (e.g. test accommodation forms).
2. Discover your areas of learning strength and weakness (e.g. how do I learn the best?). Make a list. Communicate any relevant strong or weak areas to your professor to allow him/her to help you learn better.
3. Identify the functional limitations of your disability (e.g. how does my disability impact me in the day to day academic setting?). Think of how you best learn in the classroom and what interferes with your learning as well as what enhances it!
4. Prep and practice with the LRC director. This way, you will feel more comfortable talking with your professor. Once you have completed the four steps above, you are ready to do the following:
  1. Schedule an appointment to discuss accommodations during professors' office hours or at some mutually convenient time. \*Professors' office hours are usually listed on the course syllabus. Meeting in a more relaxed, one-on-one setting with your professor, rather than right before or after class, helps eliminate the feeling of being rushed, or being caught by surprise. It also increases privacy, minimizes distractions, and sets the stage for building a comfortable rapport between you and your professor.
  2. When your accommodations include testing or note taking services, it is best to talk with your professors about logistical arrangements. In other words, avoid simply handing your professors the forms and leaving before developing a plan. Think of how you best learn in the classroom and what interferes with your learning as well as what enhances it!
  3. Make sure that the professor is familiar with the test accommodation process at MICA, confidential memos, and your specific accommodations.

### WHEN SHOULD I TELL PROFESSORS ABOUT MY ACCOMMODATIONS & DISABILITY-RELATED ISSUES?

Timing can be important. Often it is best to approach your professors either before, or within the first few days of the term. However, students who disclose their accommodation needs later in the term are encouraged to give professors ample notice.

## HOW OFTEN SHOULD I TALK WITH MY PROFESSOR ABOUT MY ACCOMMODATIONS OR NEEDS?

Talk with your professors periodically throughout the term to inform them about any challenges you are facing in the class. Frequent communication between professor and student helps accommodations work well. For many students, well-executed accommodations mean the difference between success and failure. Try to react positively and communicate openly! Ask questions to clarify statements from the professor. Repeat what you heard back to the professor to make sure both parties are on the same page. Take notes during the conversation to capture all that is communicated.

### Emails

Avoid sending emails that you would not feel comfortable saying in person. Do not send emails in ALL CAPS. If there is a breakdown in communication, take a deep breath. Then, contact the LRC at [lrc@mica.edu](mailto:lrc@mica.edu) or 410-225-2407.

## WHAT ABOUT CONFIDENTIALITY?

Under legal mandates and College policy governing confidentiality, faculty and the LRC are committed to confidentiality regarding information you disclose personally or by other means of written communication.

## HOW MUCH DISABILITY-SPECIFIC INFORMATION SHOULD I SHARE WITH MY PROFESSORS?

Your professors may ask for more information from you than is written on your accommodation letter and try to make you feel comfortable to provide helpful information related to your academic success and curriculum access. You should feel comfortable answering questions related to the accommodations requested. You are not obligated to give any information you feel is personal or does not relate to the accommodations requested. Legally you are not required to disclose the nature of your disability or to submit copies of disability documentation to other University departments or personnel once you have become a registered student with the LRC. You are invited to meet with the LRC director when deliberating about how much disability-related information to share.

## WHAT ARE MY OPTIONS AND RIGHTS IF THE PROFESSOR DOES NOT WANT TO IMPLEMENT AN ACCOMMODATION?

If it appears that the professor has some questions about the accommodation or uncertainty about the process, contact the LRC right away. You may also suggest the professor contact the LRC directly by emailing [lrc@mica.edu](mailto:lrc@mica.edu) or calling 410-225-2407. When you work as a team (you, faculty, LRC), a solution is usually not difficult to find.

SAMPLE TEMPLATE YOU MAY SEND/EDIT TO PROFESSORS FOR EFFECTIVE  
COMMUNICATION

Here is an example of a template you may use to effectively communicate with your professor.

Dear Professor \_\_\_\_\_, (Enter Professor's Name)

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_(enter your name) and I will be in your course  
\_\_\_\_\_ (enter course name) this \_\_\_\_\_ (enter semester). I am currently  
a student registered with the Learning Resource Center (LRC) and approved for  
accommodations through the LRC. The LRC has sent you a copy of my Accommodations Letter  
with specifics on the accommodations that I am currently approved for. I would like to meet with  
you to discuss my accommodations for your class. Please let me know a date and time that we  
can meet. I sincerely thank you for your time and look forward to working with you. If you have  
any questions, you may also contact the LRC at lrc@mica.edu.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_ (enter your name)

\_\_\_\_\_ (enter your student ID #)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Provide your phone #)