

Crafting Clear Accommodation Wording

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We ask you to join us in creating a culture that reflects...

Access and Inclusion

and

Civility and Respect

...this week and in all aspects of our organization.

Access Needs

- Slides and materials are posted online
- Take breaks as needed
- Ask questions throughout
- Use the mic when speaking
- Stand or stretch as needed

Why is This Important?

- Clearly written accommodations
 - Facilitate the accommodations process
 - Reduce confusion
 - Reduce conflict
 - Set clear process and procedures
 - Set clear expectations

Impacts of Unclear Accommodation Wording

- Create confusion for students and faculty
- Create conflict
 - Between students and instructors
 - Between instructors and Disability Services
 - Between students and disability services
- Set unrealistic expectations
- Create loopholes to not provide accommodations or to over accommodate

What to Include in Clear Accommodation Wording

The Who, What, When, Where, and How

Who

- Who is responsible for initiating or implementing the different aspects of the accommodation and/or its procedures.
 - Student needs to...
 - Instructor is responsible for...
 - Disability Services will...

What

- What is the accommodation asking for?
 - Lecture slides need to be shared with the student
 - Exam time needs to be extended
 - Course materials need to be made accessible
- What else needs to happen as part of the accommodation?
 - Student and instructor need to communicate

When

- What is the timeline for implementation of the accommodation?
 - Lecture slides need to be provided before class"
 - Student needs to communicate with the instructor within 24 hours of the missed class
- When does the accommodation apply?
 - Deadline extensions apply to out of class assignments

Where

- Where will different parts of the accommodation take place or apply to?
 - Exams will be taken in the testing center
 - Accessible PDFs will be posted on the class website
 - Formal communication will be sent to student's school email

How

- How will the accommodation be implemented or facilitated?
 - The testing center will proctor the exam
 - An external vendor will add captions to course videos
 - Student and instructor need to discuss accommodation logistics

Sometimes, Why

- The why behind an accommodation is that it is needed due to a disability.
- This is usually stated in the preamble of the accommodation letter.
 - Do not restate in every accommodation.
- Use the "why" strategically
 - Help explain why a more complex accommodation is needed

Institutional Considerations

- Take institutional context into consideration when writing accommodations
- Things to consider
 - Accommodation philosophy
 - University process and procedures
 - Resources
 - In-person vs online class structure

Other Tips

- Clear is kind
- Avoid ambiguity
- Be vague only when necessary
 - Don't accommodate yourself into a corner
- Have clearly written process and procedure documents that are separate from the accommodation letter
- Use the accommodation letter to add additional information
- Review accommodation wording on a regular basis and make adjustments as needed

Examples

Let's practice changing unclear accommodations into clear ones

Example 1: Unclear Version

Quiet Exam Room

Example 1: Clearer Version

Exam Room with Limited Distractions: an exam room where noise and distractions are reduced but complete silence is not guaranteed

Example 2: Unclear Version

1-Day deadline extension

Example 2: Clearer Version

1-Day Deadline Extension: Provide the student an additional 1-day to turn in out of class assignments without grade penalty if they have notified the instructor and turned it in within the extension timeframe listed. While notification prior to the deadline is ideal, the student can notify the instructor about the need to use this accommodation at any point during the extension timeframe.

Example 3: Unclear Version

Access to PowerPoint slides

Example 3: Clearer Version

Access to Copies of Lecture/Class Materials Prior to Class: Prior to class, this student requires access to copies of materials presented during class. Examples include, but are not limited to, PowerPoint/lecture slides or documents that will be presented in class.

Example 4: Unclear Version

Breaks during exams

Example 4: Clearer Version

Bathroom Breaks During Exams/Quizzes This student is allowed to take breaks during exams/quizzes to use the bathroom. This will not pause the exam time. The student needs to inform the proctor when they are taking bathroom breaks. During breaks, the student is not allowed to look at or access personal devices or course-related materials

Breaks During Exams/Quizzes : This student is allowed to take breaks during exams/quizzes. This will not pause the exam time. The student must stay within sight of the proctor. For online exams/quizzes that use a virtual proctor, the student must stay within sight of the virtual proctor. During breaks, the student is not allowed to look at or access their personal devices or course-related materials.

Thank You

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