



Class Participation or Alternative Assessment Accommodations

Accommodation guidance adapted from the Office of Accessible Education at Stanford University

An accommodation for adjusted class participation or alternative forms of assessment may be provided to a student if they experience a disability that substantially limits their functioning during cold-calling sessions, in-class discussions, and/or oral presentations. The adjusted or alternative assessment provides an otherwise qualified student with an equitable opportunity to that of their peers to demonstrate their knowledge and learning in a course. Thereby removing barriers in the course environment that would have otherwise denied the student access and participation therein.

When considering options for adjusted or alternative assessment, faculty should focus on the essential learning objectives of the course. Adjusted or alternative assessment must provide faculty means with which to assess a student's progress towards essential learning objectives.

Examples of Adjusted or Alternative Assessment

Cold-calling sessions

- Student is given advance notice of when they are to be called upon in class (e.g., emailed the day before)
- Student is given advance notice of the cold-calling question(s) they will be asked (e.g., emailed the day before) so they may prepare their response(s)

In-class discussions

- Student submits written response(s) to discussion prompt(s)
- Student has discussion individually with instructor
- Student has discussion with instructor and a small group (3-4)
- Student is assessed via online discussion board

Oral Presentations

- Student presents individually to instructor
- Student presents to instructor and a small group (3-4)
- For individual presentations, student is given the option to present with a partner or group
- Student is given the choice of when to present (e.g., date, beginning/middle/end of class)
- Student does not receive a grading deduction if they read from notes/script while presenting
- Student sits at a table or desk while presenting
- Student records video and/or audio in advance to be presented during class
- Student creates slideshow with video and/or audio embedded within each slide with their comments
- Student submits a written paper on the subject matter
- Student submits a portfolio of evidence demonstrating their mastery of the skill or subject matter

When is Adjusted or Alternative Assessment Not Reasonable?

An adjusted or alternative assessment would not be a reasonable accommodation if it would fundamentally alter the essential learning objectives of a specific course. For example, alternative assessment in lieu of cold calling may not be a reasonable accommodation in a course that has an essential learning objective related to students demonstrating the ability to engage in extemporaneous analysis and discussion of topics with others. If an instructor has concerns that an adjusted or alternative assessment would present a fundamental alteration to the essential elements and learning objectives of their course, they should contact the Accommodation & Disability Services Office (ads@abac.edu).

Student Responsibilities

1. **Attend the first day of classes and review the syllabus for each course to be aware of course requirements related to class participation.** Regardless of disability or accommodations, all students are held to the same evaluation standards and are responsible for meeting the essential learning objectives of the course, as specified in the course syllabus.
2. **Provide your instructors with your accommodation letter at the beginning of the semester or as soon as you are eligible for accommodations.** Timely notice of accommodations is critical as accommodations are not retroactive.
3. **Follow up with each relevant instructor to discuss how this accommodation is applicable to their course.** It is important to explore the boundaries of reasonableness for this accommodation in light of specific course learning objectives, as accommodations may not fundamentally alter any essential elements of a course.
4. **Contact Accommodation & Disability Services if you have questions or concerns at any point during the process.**

Faculty Responsibilities

1. **Review the essential learning objectives of your course.** Make sure they are focused on outcomes rather than means, where appropriate, in line with general principles of universal design for learning.
2. **List the essential learning objectives of your course on your syllabus.** Establishing clear expectations leads to positive results.
3. **Consult with Accommodation & Disability Services if there is a question of reasonability.** ADS will communicate to the student if a determination of non-reasonability has been made and review proposed alternatives with the student as part of the interactive process.
4. **Communicate to the requesting student acknowledgment of determined accommodations.** If an alternative assessment has been agreed upon, we recommend that you provide the student with a detailed description of the alternative assessment's rubric for grading.
5. **Contact Accommodation & Disability Services if you have questions or concerns at any point during the process.**

Communication Email Template

Initial Coordination of Accommodation Agreement

Dear Professor _____,

My name is _____ and I am a student in your _____ course. I am writing to follow up on my accommodation letter (attached) from the Office of Accommodation & Disability Services outlining my approved accommodations and to proactively explore how my accommodation for class participation accommodations may work in your course.

Please let me know whether an adjusted approach or an alternative form of assessment would be feasible and appropriate in lieu of what is outlined in the syllabus.

Thank you in advance for your assistance. Let me know if you have any questions or concerns. I have also cc'd Accommodation & Disability Services (ads@abac.edu) on this message for reference or if you have any questions or concerns about this accommodation.

Sincerely,

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