

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How does the Office of Accessibility work?

A: Students are required to bring in documentation regarding their disability in order for it to be reviewed. Once their documentation and application has been reviewed the students receive an email and letter stating what their approved reasonable accommodations are.

- A. In order for students to register with the Office of Accessibility, they are required to submit an application and appropriate documentation regarding their disability. Once their documentation and application have been reviewed and approved, the student will receive an email and letter confirming their registration with the Office of Accessibility along with their approved reasonable accommodations.

Students can view information on steps that they should take next on our webpage on the BMCC website: <http://www.bmcc.cuny.edu/accessibility/index.jsp>

Q: What forms do you use?

A: We have two major forms that students should be aware of:

1: **Accommodation Letter Request Form** – this form tells us what classes the student is taking, then we email those professors listed what the student’s approved reasonable accommodations is.

Accommodation Letter Request Form – To be completed by students in beginning of semester. Student should list all classes they are registered for in the current semester and indicate the class professor’s name. Professors will receive an email from the Office of Accessibility confirming the student’s registration with our office as well as their approved reasonable accommodations.

2: **Release of Examination Form** – this form is to be completed for **every** exam/quiz. The front part of the form is split into two sections, the **top part is to be filled out by the student**. Here is where students should put their information. Accommodations will be checked upon exam distribution. The bottom part is to be filled out completely by the professor. The information written should be what the class is receiving, as it is our job to simulate the classroom setting. **If there are any modifications, these should be written on the form with the professors initials next to it.**

Q: How do I know if a student is registered with the Office of Accessibility?

A: After a student completes the accommodation letter request form, an office assistant at the front desk will collect the form and will notify each professor the student listed via email. In the email, details include the accommodations the student receives from our office, as well as policies and procedures the Instructor should familiarize themselves with.

Q: How do I schedule an exam?

A: Scheduling an exam with the Office of Accessibility (OA) requires a Release of Examination (ROE) form. Forms can be obtained from the office, N360, or on our website. It is the student's responsibility to acquire this form, fill out part 1, and submit it to their professor one week prior to the upcoming exam. Part 2 is completed by the Professor. It is important to indicate the date of the exam, allotted time the class is receiving, and delivery preference. Once the form is complete, the student must bring the form back to the OA to be scheduled. A form must be submitted for every exam throughout the semester.

Q: Do accommodations allow students to change (pick) their exam dates and times?

A: Changing an exam date and time is at the discretion of the professor administering the exam. Students with test accommodations are permitted double time; however they cannot change a test date without prior permission. The Office of Accessibility will not change an exam date without confirmation from the instructor administering the exam.

Q: What if I suspect a student has a disability?

A: You may not legally ask a student if she has a disability but you can make inquiries about the nature of her difficulties. You may ask if she has had difficulty before and how she was able to succeed in her classes. The student may voluntarily disclose her disability, though she has not yet registered with the Office of Accessibility. At that point, a referral to the Office of Accessibility is appropriate. If she does not disclose, you may simply tell her that you notice she is having academic difficulty and encourage her to talk with you about gaining assistance, just as you would with any student.

Q: Why can't I ask a student about his disability?

A: Students are not required to identify the nature of their disabilities to their professors. However, professors have a right to know if students who say they have a disability have been officially approved for accommodations.

If you have a question regarding the need for accommodations, contact the Office of Accessibility, which will have documentation regarding the student's disability on file. Staff

cannot give you details about the disability unless the student has signed a written consent form, but they can inform you if the student has a documented disability and if the accommodation requested is appropriate.

If a student chooses to disclose her disability to you, it's important to maintain confidentiality. The confidential nature of disability-related information has been an overarching principle of nondiscrimination law.

Q: What is a reasonable accommodation?

A: Colleges and universities are required to make reasonable accommodations in their practices, policies and procedures, and to provide auxiliary aids and services for persons with disabilities, unless to do so would fundamentally alter the nature of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, and accommodations they offer, or would result in an undue financial or administrative burden on the institution. (<http://www.ada.gov/cguide.htm>)

In the academic setting reasonable accommodations are modifications or adjustments to the tasks or environment or to the way things are 'typically' done to allow individuals with disabilities to have equal opportunity in an academic program.

Examples of Reasonable Accommodations: extended time for testing; Note taking services; signer/interpreters; adjustable desks and various forms of assistive technology.

Q: What if I want the student to test with the class? I'm okay giving the student extra time.

A: Many of the students registered with the Office of Accessibility have been assigned the test taking accommodation of a "distraction free environment." Testing with the class may be difficult for some students registered with the Office of Accessibility. Having a student test in the department or professors office is permitted so long as all approved reasonable accommodations are provided.

Q: Do students registered with the Office of Accessibility receive extensions for assignments and special considerations with attendance and punctuality?

A: Assignment extension is at the discretion of the professor only. This is not an accommodation the Office of Accessibility assigns. Students do not receive special consideration with attendance and punctuality. All students must adhere to the BMCC attendance policy.

Q: What's assistive technology?

A: Assistive technology is technology used by people with disabilities in order to perform functions that might otherwise be difficult or impossible. Examples of some of the most popular assistive technology include Jaws, ZoomText, Kurzweil, Read and Write Gold, Dragon Naturally speaking, digital smart pen and CCTV.

Q: What is the role of the note taker?

A: Note takers are to attend classes, lectures, etc. at BMCC and take clear, concise and accurate notes as a record of lectures or classes, for student(s) registered with the Office of Accessibility, who have been approved for this accommodation. Unless already enrolled in the class as a student themselves, note takers should not participate in the class and should be acting as an unobtrusive member, recording what takes place during the class session.

To respect a student's confidentiality note takers might not always sit next to the student they are taking notes for, however it is suggested that they introduce themselves to the professor at the beginning of the semester. It is also recommended that this is discussed with the student before the semester begins.

Note takers are not there to take notes in lieu of a student attending class, students are still expected to attend class regularly. If the assigned student does not show up to class, the note taker will take notes for that session and then report and document the absence with the Office of Accessibility. Note takers may also proctor exams and/or act as scribes and/or readers for the office when needed.

Helpful Articles

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/04/education/edlife/guide-to-accommodations-for-college-students-with-disabilities.html>

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.3200/CTCH.52.4.128-133>

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/How-Technology-Can-Equalize/242809>

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/I-Didn-t-Know-How-to-Ask/242412>

<https://cielo24.com/2017/02/higher-education-lawsuits-disability-discrimination/>