Make Access Easy

9 Strategies
for Higher Ed Faculty

Improving access for your disabled students doesn't have to be hard. Just a few simple strategies can make a big difference — for them and for you — because **access is more than accommodations.**

Set a welcoming tone.

In your syllabus and on the first day of class, issue a clear statement of your openness, willingness to be flexible, and desire to receive feedback about accessibility, accommodations, and open dialogue.

Make a connection.

Learn from your disabled students about what works best for them. Pay attention to student stress levels and well-being, show compassion, and find ways for them to meaningfully connect with you and with each other.

Use visual cues.

Integrate visual features (such as icons and arrows) in your syllabus, LMS, and presentation slides. Provide as much information ahead of time as possible share your slides with students, and reduce the burden of note-taking.

Explore embedded technology.

Learn about accessibility features that are part of your technology environments. Make sure images include descriptive alt text and all videos and media are captioned (including student assignments).

Offer flexible deadlines and attendance.

Space out assignments across the semester, with built-in optional extensions for all students. Provide regular reminders and updates across different platforms.

Leverage office hours.

Schedule across multiple time points, allow for confidential meetings, and time them to occur before major assignments or tests. Offer 1:1 appointments to increase student confidence and trust.
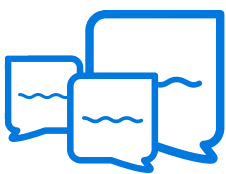
Consider multiple response options.

Within and across class assignments, create possibilities for different modalities. Find ways to connect assignments to students' lived experiences.
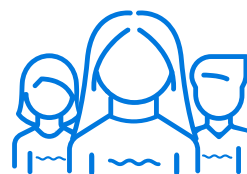
Give guidance to group activities.

Provide clear structure and expectations, including prompts, time cues, models to follow, visual artifacts, and clear synthesis. Do not assume this will happen organically.

Review workload expectations.

Most students are juggling classes, work, and home responsibilities. Consider required, core assignments that align with learning goals, then optional assignments for deeper dives.

Collaborative for Access & Equity