

**Pepperdine Faculty**  
**and**  
**Office of Student Accessibility Accommodations**  
**F A Q**

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**1. What is an accommodation and how does it work?**

Accommodating is the process of making adaptations or changes to a structure so that barriers are removed for students with various access needs. OSA at Pepperdine is dedicated to maintaining an environment that guarantees students with disabilities full access to its educational programs, activities, and facilities. Accommodations are designed to level the playing field for students with disabilities, while maintaining the integrity and standards of the University's academic programs.

Our **process to register** for receiving accommodations is three steps:

1. Complete an [online inquiry](#)
2. Submit medical documentation speaking to the need  
(must meet [guidelines](#) or use one of our forms on the OSA site)
3. Conversation with an accessibility specialist to determine what accommodations are best to remove barriers for each unique student and situation

After students complete this process, the accommodation committee meets to approve accommodations. At this point they are considered to be registered with OSA. Prior to each academic term, students are to complete a [semester request](#) to indicate that they would like to activate their accommodations. This is what triggers OSA to send an official letter of accommodation to professors.

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**2. What are some common accommodations? What do they mean?**

*Note: the list below includes some common accommodations. You may encounter other accommodations that are not listed below. Know that OSA is always here to support and answer questions about accommodations.*

- **Extended time for quizzes and exams - Usually time and a half (1.5x) or double time (2x)**
  - This means that the student will receive extended time on all quizzes and tests that are administered during class.

- [Seaver College \(Undergraduate\) Exam Accommodations](#)
- [Caruso School of Law Exam Accommodations](#)
- [Graduate School of Education and Psychology Exam Accommodations](#)
- [Graziadio Business School Exam Accommodations](#)
- [School of Public Policy Exam Accommodations](#)
- **Distraction reduced room for quizzes and exams**
  - Please see above documents for each individual school regarding exam policies and procedures.
- **Class notetaker (provided by OSA)**
  - Students with this accommodation will be able to view the notes of an anonymous peer digitally. OSA carries the responsibility of recruiting and hiring these notetakers, though we may reach out to professors for support if a notetaker is not identified in a timely manner. Students with this accommodation who are having trouble accessing notes or who have other questions or concerns direct inquiries to [notetakers@pepperdine.edu](mailto:notetakers@pepperdine.edu).
- **Audio recording of lectures**
  - Audio recording of lectures functions similarly to note-taking as an accommodation, as it supports students with comprehending material that is delivered by the professor during class time. All students with this accommodation must sign the [Audio Recording Agreement Form](#). It is the student's responsibility to record. Often, they will use their cell phone or computer to do this. While this accommodation is designed primarily to capture professor lecture, there is an understanding that some student conversation may inevitably be captured. In this regard, some professors find it helpful to write "this class may be recorded" on the board (without implicating the student with the accommodation).
- **Use of a word processor for note-taking in class and/or on essay exams**
  - Some students may experience a barrier to access when asked to handwrite for long periods of time. The ability to use a word processor, most often a laptop computer, to type instead of handwrite can be given as an accommodation for class note-taking, essay exams, or both. For in-class use of a word processor, professor and student should have a discussion about implementation, expectations, and best practices.
- **Occasional absences during times of increased symptom severity**
  - Occasional absences allow students "x" number of absences beyond what is

allotted in the syllabus without penalty to their grade. The number of reasonable absences varies on a course by course basis based on the design of the class. Similarly to the above accommodation, it is important to discuss implementation of this accommodation in advance. How should the student let you know when they are in a flare and need to be absent? How many times might the student be able to be absent before it impacts the core objectives of the course? See below for more, and also note that there is a helpful list of questions on our website to guide this discussion:

<https://www.pepperdine.edu/student-accessibility/accommodations/occasional-absences-during-times-of-symptom-severity.htm>

- **Extension on individual assignments (except final course papers or graded exams) during times of symptom flare ups in consultation with professor based on design of course**
  - This accommodation applies to individual assignments. It is important to connect with the student either at the beginning of the term or shortly after receiving the accommodation letter to discuss this accommodation. Students should be initiating this discussion, but some may not. During the conversation, it will be key to establish a norm of communication. If there is a need to provide an extension due to flareup, determine together how this information should be communicated. Should the student email? Is a phone call better? Note that extensions are designed to support in times of symptom flare up only. This accommodation should not be applied to every, or even many, assignment(s).
- **Short breaks during class as needed for management of symptoms**
  - We ask that students keep these breaks within the time frame of 5 minutes or less. Please be mindful to avoid calling attention to students who need breaks.
- **Possible alternatives for public presentations based on course objectives for the current academic term. To be worked out on an individual basis between OSA, professor, and student, based on the structure and requirements of the class.**  
***Note: this is not a common accommodation.***
  - This means that the student has evidenced a barrier to presenting in public. This does not exempt the student from being called on in class or participating in break out sessions; it is for actual presentations. Alternatives to the presentation can be discussed with the student. Know that this is approved semester by semester as we hope the student will grow into presenting to the class. One caveat: for some students with this accommodation, they may be hesitant to speak up in class. For those who identify to you as such, it may be helpful for them to have a heads up that you plan to call on them.
  - Examples of alternatives that have worked in the past:
    - The student records their piece of the presentation in advance

- Asking classmates/others in the virtual space to turn their camera off
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**3. *Who is responsible for broaching the topic of ‘Occasional Absences’, the professor or the student?***

- We want the student to take initiative and own their disability and accommodations. Not all students are ready for this just yet. If the student hasn’t contacted you within a week of receiving the accommodation letter, please initiate the conversation. If it is already week 3 or 4 of the term, please do not wait a week. Go ahead and initiate.
- While connecting with the student about their accommodation, please discuss syllabus attendance absences so that the student is aware of attendance required to pass the course. Identify the number of absences beyond what is in the syllabus that allows the student a reasonable accommodation. In some cases, it may just be one or two in addition to what is in the syllabus.

Here are some questions we recommend you think through with the student (though there may be other questions more specific to a course) to make sure there is mutual understanding of expectations of this accommodation:

- How is attendance an essential component of the class?
  - If the student misses class, are they missing the conversations and the learning that are taking place between classmate conversations?
  - If there is an attendance policy, would there be the option to have any additional excused absence(s)?
  - What is the policy for the class if the student misses more than the excused absences (including any additional ones that are negotiated with the professor and student)?
  - Is attendance using remote technology (such as ZOOM, Google Hangout or Facetime) a possibility during a flare-up, and if so, for what percentage of the class meetings?
- How should the student submit work if absent on a day that an assignment is due? Would the student submit unfinished work on the due date?
- If the student is absent on the day of a quiz, exam or presentation, is there a class policy already in place regarding missed quizzes, exams, or presentations? If the student misses a presentation, would the student submit materials electronically and present at another class?
- How and when should the professor be notified when the student is having a flare-up?

What are the expectations of communication?

- If the frequency of absences impacts the structure and learning of the class, the professor will discuss with the student and OSA.
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**4. *The student has not presented an accommodation letter. May I offer accommodations anyway?***

You may offer the student whatever general support you would offer any student; please do not offer disability accommodations without a letter from OSA. Please refer students to OSA.

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**5. *Are accommodations retroactive?***

No, accommodations are never retroactive. You may receive an accommodation letter at any point in the term as students can register with OSA on a rolling basis. Accommodations are to begin when you receive the accommodation letter. Please say no to any request for retroactive accommodations.

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**6. *Note Taking, audio recording, and privacy:***

In select circumstances, based on the design and nature of the course, a professor may inform the class that group discussion is not going to be part of any graded or assessed assignment. Because of that, notes should not be taken.

If no one is allowed to take notes, then the notetaker is not allowed to take notes.

Students with audio recording accommodations must sign the [Audio Recording Form](#) and adhere to the agreement. As mentioned above, this accommodation is designed to capture content from class lectures rather than group discussion, when possible. The student is responsible for making the recording on their own device, though faculty are welcome to use the ZOOM recording feature if they prefer.

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**7. *How to arrange for accommodations that may be needed outside of the class sessions -- e.g., if a meeting with a student who requires a sign language interpreter is needed?***

The student will know how to arrange for the accommodation. They have all the information they need to contact the vendor or the OSA office for arrangements. Don't be shy to ask the student if accommodations are necessary and arranged.

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8. ***What is the best way for an instructor to find out how a student's disability(ies) are likely to impact specific aspects of academic performance? For example, a deaf student's writing may display greater variability than a hearing student's writing given the different syntactical nature of sign language vs. spoken language. Instructors not aware of this might inadvertently attribute this to poor writing ability and penalize the student, etc.***

This answer may be as varied as the students we teach. Be aware of what you are seeing and make allowances. The student is the best representative of what they need or how their disabilities (or associated affects) manifest.

Students should be held to professional standards within the program. In some ways similar to teaching second language speakers, each professor needs to determine how to work with differences in culture and language norms.

Accommodations are made for access. Please consider what you would hold any other student to and support the student to reach those standards.

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9. ***How do I get a video captioned?***

All videos used in class must be captioned. For clarification, this would be any video shown live in class, or assigned for student viewing outside of class time. If it isn't captioned, you may not use it.

Please email [Amanda Kopang](#) and [Jennifer Baker](#) in OSA to get videos captioned. Kindly follow the guidelines below when submitting videos as there is specific information needed. Captioning videos can take up to two weeks.

**Course title**

*Week #:*

*Instructor:*

*Video Title:*

*Host Platform:*

*Video Link:*

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10. ***How do I make my materials 'screen reader accessible' and what does that mean?***

'Screen reader accessible' materials are files in formats which can be used with adaptive

technology software or devices used for screen reading. Students may need texts in Braille, large print, electronic and/or audio formats, depending on their needs. There are various ways to make the materials 'screen reader accessible' depending on the type of the materials. Here are a few common materials used:

- *Textbooks* - Select textbooks and readings at least five weeks in advance of the first day of class to allow students time to acquire required course materials. It can take over a month to procure alternate formats.
- *PDF files in Microsoft* - One way to check PDF accessibility is to run the [Accessibility Checker](#) (available for Microsoft Office programs) before generating or saving your document as a PDF file. You can then apply the recommended actions based on the report of the program. There are detailed [instructions](#) on how to save an accessible PDF in Office.
- *Accessibility of Google Suite (Google Doc and Slides)* -For Google Documents and Slides, please review [this page](#) for additional information.
- [Portland Community College's Online Accessibility Handbook](#) is a great online resource for detailed information about creating accessible documents using PowerPoints & Google Slides, Word and Google Documents, and Video & Audio.
- *Accessibility Checker within Courses by Sakai* - Consider the following tutorial from the Technology and Learning team for instructions on [How to Utilize the CKEditor Accessibility Checker](#) for materials that are posted to Courses.

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#### **11. What's a good way to ask a student if they need OSA support?**

You may want to talk to the student and mention they seem to be struggling or in a rough patch. You can offer the student a list of Pepperdine resources. You could reference [OSA](#) alongside the [Student Counseling Center](#), the [Student Health Center](#), the [Student Care Team](#), the [Student Success Center](#), [RISE](#), and the [Hub for Spiritual Life](#). You could also ask if they have received academic support in the past.

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#### **12. What if the accommodations would change the course objectives or learning outcomes?**

Please work with OSA. Each accommodation letter has the language below that instructs professors to communicate in writing to OSA within three days of receiving a letter that has accommodations that will compromise the course:

All accommodations included in the accommodation letter are mandatory and

must be provided. If, for some reason, a professor feels that the approved accommodations will compromise the course objectives, the professor should communicate in writing to the Office of Student Accessibility within three (3) days of receiving the student accommodation letter. The written communication should include why the accommodation will compromise the course or fundamentally alter the course objectives. The professor should include alternative accommodations where possible. Please note that, while alternatives are being considered, the accommodations must be implemented as written.

The OSA will respond to the written communication within three (3) days. The response will be the result of an interactive process with the professor and appropriate dean, if necessary, where the course objectives and the requested accommodations are discussed. Any questions or concerns professors may have about a student's approved academic adjustments should be addressed to the OSA Director.

Pepperdine's ADA compliance for accommodating students with disabilities and a variety of other disability-related resources are available at the OSA or on our website at [www.pepperdine.edu/student-accessibility](http://www.pepperdine.edu/student-accessibility). Any additional questions or concerns can be discussed by contacting the Office of Student Accessibility at 310-506-6500. We are located in SAC 105 on the Malibu Campus

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### **13. *I still have questions.***

OSA is here to help with the definition, understanding, and implementation of accommodations. Please reach out with any question large or small. [student.accessibility@pepperdine.edu](mailto:student.accessibility@pepperdine.edu) and 310.506.6500.

**Sample accommodation letter:**





DATE: August 10, 2022

FROM: Amanda Kopang, Exam Systems Manager

RE: Harry S. Potter (CWID 10000000) [harry.potter@pepperdine.edu](mailto:harry.potter@pepperdine.edu)

Approved accommodations for Harry Potter are as follows:

- **Extended time for quizzes and exams - Time and a half (1.5x)**
- **Alternative texts (provided by OSA)**
- **Class note-taker (provided by OSA)**

For the following courses this term:

**Fall 2022**

- **PSY 606 26 (Hannah Warner [hannah.warner@pepperdine.edu](mailto:hannah.warner@pepperdine.edu))**
- **PSY 669 21 (Dominique Malebranche [dominique.malebranche@pepperdine.edu](mailto:dominique.malebranche@pepperdine.edu))**
- **PSY 626 22 (Jennifer Vaughn [jennifer.m.vaughn@pepperdine.edu](mailto:jennifer.m.vaughn@pepperdine.edu))**

All professors in classes above are copied on this semester's Academic Accommodation Letter.

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