DISABLED STUDENTS’ CAMPAIGN - EMAIL TEMPLATES

These templates are intended as guidelines for disabled students (or for any other student who may find them useful) to aid in contacting various members of the university for various reasons. As disabled students, ironically, we often face ten times the amount of admin just to ensure we’re getting equal access to education - hopefully these templates can ease the burden just a little. Click the links below to see the email templates in each section.

Supervisor emails

Recording supervisions

DRC emails

Access needs not being met

Lecture access

Library needs

College emails

[Red] = fill in as appropriate

If you have any further suggestions of templates to add to this document, please email disabled@cusu.cam.ac.uk
Supervisor emails

Can’t attend

Dear [supervisor],

Unfortunately, I will be unable to attend the supervision we have scheduled for [date] because [reason: e.g. my chronic illness is flaring up/I am not well/whatever detail you feel comfortable sharing]. Optional: Please refer to my student support document for more information about my condition and the adjustments I need.

Options:
1. Would it be possible to provide me with [essay/example sheet/other work] feedback via email, as it will be difficult to reschedule the supervision this term?
2. Please could we reschedule this supervision? I have availability [at these times, on these weeks].
3. I am unsure when I will be well enough to reschedule the supervision but will be in contact about this unless I hear otherwise.

Thank you for your understanding.

Kind regards,

[name]

Missed supervision

Dear [supervisor],

My sincere apologies for having missed our supervision today and for not having been able to contact you to give advance notice. Unfortunately due to my disability, I was suffering from unexpected health issues that prevented me from attending - please refer to my student support document for further explanation.

Options:
1. Would it be possible to provide me with [essay/example sheet/other work] feedback via email, as it will be difficult to reschedule the supervision this term?
2. Please could we reschedule this supervision? I have availability [at these times, on these weeks].
3. I am unsure when I will be well enough to reschedule the supervision but will be in contact about this unless I hear otherwise.
Thank you for your understanding.

Kind regards,

[name]

Unable to do work set

Dear [supervisor],

Unfortunately, I will be unable to hand in [whatever work - e.g. an essay or example sheet] for our supervision on [date] because [reason: e.g. my chronic illness is flaring up/I am not well/whatever detail you feel comfortable sharing]. Optional: Please refer to my student support document for more information about my condition and the adjustments I may need.

Options:
1. I have attached an essay plan, for which it would be helpful to receive feedback.
2. I would still benefit from attending a supervision to discuss the topic of the [essay/example sheet/etc] and clarify some questions I have.

I will see you on [date] as planned, unless I hear otherwise. Thank you for your understanding.

Kind regards,
[Name]

Access needs not met

Dear [supervisor],

I have a supervision scheduled with you for [date]. I have [disability/medical condition/whatever you wish to share] which affects my ability to [specify as required, e.g. use stairs/ have joint supervisions/ hear in environments with background noise]. The supervision is set to be [inappropriate place/circumstances e.g. in room without level access/no lift/noisy shared space/with other students].

As per my student support document, attached, this will not be possible for me. [Insert change to circumstance] will enable me to attend and benefit from the supervision. Please let me know if this will be possible at [date and time originally scheduled] or whether we need to reschedule.

Kind regards,

[Name]
Request supervision out of term/other form of feedback

Dear [supervisor name],

Because of my [disability], I have been unable to have the usual number of supervisions this term. I wondered if it would be possible to …

Options:
1. Have a supervision outside of term, as I will be in Cambridge from [date: date].
2. Have a supervision outside of term over Skype, because I will not be in Cambridge.
3. Ask a few clarificatory questions via email, since I have not had the opportunity to do so in supervisions.
4. Send you an essay to receive feedback via email rather than in a supervision.

Please let me know whether this will be possible. Thanks for your understanding.

Kind regards,

[name]
Recording supervisions

*Can I record - supervisor*

Dear [supervisor name],

As I am sure [my DOS] has made you aware, I am dyslexic [or insert other reason]. As such, I hope that you will feel comfortable with me recording our supervision so that I can make better use of your advice and answers. I record for my own personal use only [and have signed a confidentiality agreement to this effect].

Best Regards,
[name]

*Can I record - fellow supervisee*

Dear [fellow supervisee],

I'm [name] - I'll be sharing your supervision on [day/time]. I am [e.g. dyslexic/other disability/vaguer explanation], so I record all my lectures, practicals and supervisions. Normally I have supervisions alone, so it's not a problem to record them. I wanted to ask if it would be alright with you if I record the supervision on [day]. They're for my own use only: no one else hears them. I find it immensely helpful to be able to listen back to supervisions, and I would greatly appreciate it. However, if it makes you uncomfortable, please let me know.

Best wishes,
[name]
First email to DRC advisor

Dear [DRC adviser: colleges have a named adviser and there are specific advisors for certain disabilities],

I am a [1st year/2nd year/etc] [undergraduate/postgraduate] student at [college].

Options:
1. I have a diagnosis of [disability] and would like to meet to discuss the adjustments which would help me work.
2. I believe that I may have [disability] and would like to meet to discuss my options regarding diagnosis and receiving adjustments at university.

Please could you let me know how to arrange an appointment to discuss this with you.

Kind regards,

[name]
**Access needs not being met**

*Initial email to dept/college*

Dear [person in question],

I have a student support document provided by the Disability Resource Centre, to enable me to study alongside my [disability/preferred term]. As per this document, I require [adjustment] in order to successfully complete my degree. Unfortunately, [situation] is currently not providing these adjustments [optional: and therefore I am struggling in x way].

Please could you [contact the person who can make a difference/do something different] to ensure that the reasonable adjustments to which I am entitled under the Equality Act are met. If this is not possible I will seek guidance from the DRC.

Kind regards,
[name]

*Follow up to DRC if the reply is obstructive/unhelpful/non-existent*

Dear [DRC advisor],

The reasonable adjustments outlined on my SSD are not being met by [person] in [situation]. This is greatly limiting my ability to study.

Please could you [contact person/let me know what I should do in this situation] to ensure that the requirements of my SSD are met? Do let me know if it would be easier to [meet/talk on the phone/other] to discuss this.

Kind regards,
[Name]

*(Designed for if there has been a prior email to the person trying to sort this out already.)*
**Lecture access**

*Advance prior access to handouts*

Dear [lecturer name],

I am an undergraduate student from [college name] going into [tripos and year] in October. I am hoping to get hold of the lecture notes for [course] from last year's [tripos part], so that I can prepare for next year. I have [disability], so being able to read the notes at my own pace before term would be very helpful. Thanks in advance for any help you can provide with this.

Kind regards,
[name]

*Shorter term prior access to handouts*

Dear [lecturer name],

I am an undergraduate student from [college name] taking [paper/lecture series/etc] this term. I am hoping to get hold of the lecture notes for [lecture series or particular lecture] in advance of the lectures, so that I can pre-read the notes in order to equip me better for the lecture. I have [disability], (and advance access to lecture notes is one of the reasonable adjustments on my student support document which you will hopefully have received from my DoS), so being able to read the notes at my own pace before attending the lecture would be very helpful. Thanks in advance for any help you can provide with this.

Kind regards,
[name]

*Altered format handouts etc*

Dear [lecturer name],

I am an undergraduate student from [college name] in [tripos and year] and am [currently attending/going to attend] your lecture series [lecture series name]. Because of [my disability] and as stated on my Student Support Document, I require [requirement relating to lectures – e.g. handouts with one slide per page]. Please could you ensure that these are either available at the lectures or for me to download in advance from [camtools/Moodle/whatever idiosyncratic software used by individual departments]. Thanks for your help with this.

Kind regards,
[name]
Library needs

General email

Dear [librarian name, or ‘X Library Head Librarian’],

I am an undergraduate student from [college name] in [faculty] and am a user of the [library name]. Because of [my disability] and as stated on my Student Support Document, in order to access certain materials for my course, I require [details of alternative formats, physical access needs, etc].

Options:
1. If the necessary materials for [course or paper etc] exist in [format], would it be possible to obtain them? If not, would it be possible for the library to transfer the materials into [format]?
2. In particular, I require [format] of [specific resources]. Could I please be given access to this if it already exists, and if not, would it be possible for the library to transfer the [book/paper/resource(s)] into this format?
3. I possess software which can transfer [specific format, e.g. text-selectable file] into [necessary format, e.g. large print]; could I please be given access to [specific resource] in the former file format so that I can convert it to the latter?
4. Would it be possible for [access arrangement] to be put into place in the library so that I am able to use the space? If not, or in the interim period, could assistance be made available or an alternative solution be put into place so that I can use the library as needed?

Thanks for your help with this.

Kind regards,

[name]

Overdue loans, request for longer loans

Dear [librarian name, or ‘X Library Head Librarian’],

Because of [my disability] as stated on my Student Support Document, which includes symptoms of [symptoms like inattention/disorganisation/fatigue/difficulty managing time/difficulty responding to communication], I have had great difficulty returning my library loans. I apologise for any inconvenience caused.

I am writing to request that my loans are extended and if possible, to arrange yearly or termly loaning periods within your library to accomodate my difficulties managing library loans.
Additionally, I would greatly appreciate it if my outstanding fees from overdue returns were excused.

I would be very grateful for any help. Please feel free to ask me any further questions and I await your reply.

Best wishes,

[Name]
College accommodation needs - initial email

Dear [named person in tutorial office/accommodation services],

I am an incoming/a current student at [college] with [disability], which results in me needing [access need - such as particular accommodation, a fridge in my room, wheelchair access to a particular college facility, etc].

Options:
1. Would it be possible for this to be arranged for me in advance of my arrival? I can send over any relevant medical evidence if necessary/I attach the relevant medical evidence to this email.
2. Would it be possible for this adjustment to be made as soon as possible, in accordance with my student support document/existing medical evidence provided, which I believe the college will have on file?

Thanks for your help with this.

Kind regards,
[name]

College accommodation needs - pricing

Dear [named person in tutorial office/accommodation services],

I previously got in contact regarding my need for [adjustment] due to my [disability]. I'm concerned that the solution proposed might currently be in breach of DRC guidelines (and the Equality Act 2010) since it is costing me personally more than would be the case if I were not disabled. [E.g.: Because I need a room with an en suite for disability reasons, and could not choose a cheaper room without an en suite as that is not an option due to my disability, I believe I should be being charged according to the average price band across non-ensuite rooms in college, since having an en suite is a reasonable adjustment which should not incur extra charge for me.] Do let me know if I can clarify this further or put you in touch with my DRC adviser to explain the necessary changes to my college bill/changes to the arrangements made/reimbursement that I will require. Thanks again for your help with this.

Kind regards,
[name]
Change to college practices - fire alarms

Dear [named person in tutorial office],

I am a [first/second/etc year] student living in [specific accommodation location] in college. I have [disability] which is recorded on my student support document, which I believe the college has on file. Currently the college procedure re: fire alarms in my accommodation is [testing at differing times/testing early in the morning/etc]. Due to my [disability], this is causing me significant trouble. [E.g.: Since I have chronic fatigue syndrome, being awoken at 8am on a Friday disrupts my sleep and I find it impossible to get as much sleep as I need/Since I am autistic, sensory disruption without warning is very distressing to me, and not knowing exactly when the fire alarm will be tested means I cannot pre-prepare myself or arrange to be out of the house at that time.] Would it be possible for this practice to be changed to mitigate this - for example, [a set time/a later time]?

Thanks for your help with this. Do let me know if I should contact any other specific department or member of college about this issue.

King regards,
[name]

Change to college practices - bedders etc

Dear [named person in tutorial office/accommodation services],

I am a [first/second/etc year] student living in [specific accommodation location] in college. I have [disability] which is recorded on my student support document, which I believe the college has on file. Currently the college procedure re: bedders/cleaners/bin collection is [details]. Due to my [disability], this is causing me significant trouble. [E.g.: Since I am autistic, the disruption of my bedder entering my room whilst I am there is distressing to me/Since I have depression, I do not have the energy necessary to make my room available for cleaning twice in a week.] Would it be possible for adjustments to be made to mitigate the impact this is having on me due to my disability - for example, [leave bins outside door/bedder comes at a different time/bedder comes at a more regular time/leave a sign on the door indicating whether I can manage the bedder coming in on that particular day]?

Thanks for your help with this. Do let me know if I should contact any other specific department or member of college about this issue.

King regards,
[name]
Overdue payments/fines

[Dear [person], / To whom it may concern.]

I have recently become aware that I have [been fined/outstanding, overdue payments]. I believe that part of the reason for this is owed to my disability, [name], which involves symptoms of [fatigue/inattention/difficulty responding to communications/difficulty organising/difficulties with time management/difficulties with…]. I understand that it is my responsibility to [meet conditions so I do not incur fines/pay on time], and I apologise for any inconvenience. However, I would like to ask that my [disability/(name of disability)/(symptoms of disability)] is taken into account in this instance.

I am writing to request that my [fine/overdue payment] be [delayed/decreased/excused] on the grounds that [I will pay/I have now met the conditions for which the fine was applied/I will meet the conditions asked to avoid the fine].

I would be very grateful for any help. Please feel free to ask me any further questions and I await your reply.

Best wishes,

[Name]