



Academic Resource Guide

About Access ETSU

[Access ETSU](#) provides students with intellectual disabilities an inclusive college experience that prepares them for long-term competitive integrated employment. Students engage in academic, internship, and social activities designed around their individual interests and abilities. Students are eligible for supports and services through Access ETSU for 2 years.

Purpose of Academic Courses

Providing opportunities for students to engage in fully inclusive undergraduate classes and coursework is a core goal of Access ETSU. Courses are carefully selected on an individual basis and relate directly to a student's professional and personal goals and interests. Participation in these courses helps students gain the knowledge and skills necessary to obtain and maintain competitive, integrated employment in a field of interest. These inclusive academic experiences also help students make connections and build social capital on campus and beyond. Students in turn enrich the classroom and campus environments with their unique strengths, perspectives, and abilities.

Structure of Academic Courses

A student's placement in your course does not change the structure of your course. Students have the choice to audit or take courses for credit. For those students auditing their courses (majority of students), they will not receive a formal grade, but would value performance feedback from their professors to support their growth and learning. For those auditing courses, the Access ETSU Academic Coordinator and team work to modify syllabi and assignments on an individual basis to optimize the utility of course content and participation. Much, if not all, of the content addressed in the course is relevant to our students and with an adjustment to the delivery of information, our students are able to understand material just as anyone else would.

Student Expectations

While goals and tasks are developed on an individual basis, all students are required to:

- Be on time for all designated class meetings and activities.
- Be prepared and ready to learn. Come to class ready to use necessary school supplies - completed classwork, laptop, notebook, pen/pencil, textbook, assistive technology, planner, etc. Casual attire is acceptable.
- Be engaged. Take notes, listen to professor, classmates and BucMates, actively and positively participate in class discussions and activities. Use phone only for emergencies or appropriate class work. Take reasonable breaks, as needed.
- Advocate for self. Ask for help or clarification when needed. Secure classroom accommodations through the Disability Services office.
- Observe instructor and university policies regarding health and safety.
- Maintain a productive attitude and demonstrate respect and academic excellence with instructors, classmates, peer mentors and any other individuals with whom they interact.
- Contact instructor (and peer mentor when appropriate) about expected tardiness and absences.
- Follow any course-specific regulations and policies. Students should be held to the same standards as other students.
- Develop individualized goals to work on throughout the semester with regards to skill development, academic excellence, and/or communication skills.

Instructor Expectations

Your role and responsibilities are no different than what you would be and/or do for a traditional undergraduate student in your course. Our students are first and foremost full-time ETSU students and we hold very high expectations for our students in the classroom. However - there are some suggested steps we ask that instructors consider taking to help ensure student success in their courses.

We ask that all instructors, as appropriate:

1. Provide Access ETSU team access to the course syllabus, major assignments, tests/ quizzes as early as possible so that we might be able to make any modifications to course elements to best support student needs. Modifications will be done by the Access ETSU Academic Coordinator and team, but input from instructors is welcomed and encouraged.
2. Grant the Access ETSU Academic Coordinator and/or team members access to D2L course as a guest to help students keep up with their coursework.
3. Communicate with the Access ETSU Academic Coordinator and team regarding student progress through periodic check-ins during the semester.
4. Reach out to Access ETSU Academic Coordinator with any questions or classroom concerns regarding student performance or behavior in the academic setting.
5. Communicate directly with the student (*not their BucMate peer mentor*) when discussing course expectations, assignments, or any other pertinent information.
6. Include and engage student in all typical course activities and discussions.
7. Provide feedback to Access ETSU team via a short electronic survey at the end of the semester.

Supports Provided by Access ETSU staff and Peer Mentors (BucMates)

The Access ETSU Academic Coordinator will:

1. Be responsible for maintaining communication between the instructor and Access ETSU team and students, will assist with developing supports for students, and will provide consultation on student progress.
2. Modify syllabi and course materials for students who are auditing courses. Modifications are done on an individual, as needed basis, but might involve adjustments in acceptable expressions of learning (producing a video project or powerpoint instead of a research paper, utilizing a template with visual supports and/or prompts for a paper/ project, etc.) or adjustments to length/ frequency of assignments (writing a 2-page paper instead of a 5-page paper, eliminating questions and/or response options on an exam, turning in reflections every other week instead of weekly, etc.). Some of our students will need minimal or no modifications, while others will need significant ones.
3. Work with student, BucMate peer mentor, and instructor to implement in-class supports. Some examples may be note-taking, assistive technology, a task list, schedule, or written reminders.
4. Collect and organize data on student academic performance and course satisfaction.
5. Act as a resource for the instructor in the areas of modifications, accommodations, disability awareness, and other needs related to working with individuals with disabilities as needed. These supports can include disability awareness training for individual faculty members and/or departments, ongoing consultation in the form of emails, phone calls, and on-site visits, additional webinars, articles, or resources on creating inclusive classrooms, or any other supports the instructor deems necessary or beneficial. Access ETSU has put together an online, asynchronous training for faculty on intellectual disability awareness and academic support, which will be shared with you. Some other recommended resources for faculty include [ETSU Disability Services](#), [ETSU Center for Teaching Excellence](#) (which has some great resources and trainings on Course Design and Universal Design for Learning), and [Think College](#) (a national organization “dedicated to developing, expanding, and improving inclusive higher education options for people with intellectual disability).

Peer Mentors: Peer mentors (BucMates) support students enrolled through Access ETSU in learning required course material, completing assignments, reinforcing academic excellence and communication skills, and implementing in-class supports.

The BucMate will:

1. Help facilitate communication between the student, instructor, and Access ETSU staff throughout the semester. While peer mentors can support this process, all questions and communication should be directed through the student.
2. Provide academic support to students in completing course activities, assignments, quizzes, tests.
3. Implement individualized in-class supports which might include note-taking, prompting, re-explaining, and encouraging participation.
4. Assist Academic Coordinator with collecting data on student academic performance and course satisfaction.
5. Will fade their support to natural supports as the student gains independence in the classroom.

Classroom Accommodations

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990), adults with disabilities have the right to self-disclose their disabilities and receive reasonable accommodations if needed. We equip our students to be self-advocates, sharing with instructors how they learn and work best. Some common examples of classroom accommodations include timers, visual reminders, scheduled breaks, extended time on assignments or exams, or choosing a less crowded or loud space to complete their coursework. If accommodations are needed, students will share this information and make any requests to the instructor via the ETSU Disability Services office. Access ETSU staff are available to support with this conversation if needed.

For additional questions or concerns, please contact:

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