

A quick guide to preparing a disclosure script

What is a disclosure script?

A disclosure script is a way of making self-advocacy (i.e. speaking up for yourself) easier when you are studying with a disability.

It is a pre-prepared and rehearsed explanation of your disabilities, strengths, limitations and the adjustments required for you to study effectively.

It is delivered in either a written or verbal format to lecturers, tutors or academics to clearly explain your situation and your needs.

It discusses how your disability impacts your performance and contains unambiguous requests for adjustments and supports.

Preparing a script is an effective means of disclosing. It allows you to control the release of information about your disability in a way that helps meet your needs, but also limits the extent of what you need to share. It communicates only the relevant details about your disability as they apply to the situation.

The use of disclosure scripts helps to reduce unpleasant interactions in relation to your disability and studies (e.g. becoming distressed when talking about your disability).

You can create disclosure scripts for many different situations and intended audiences.

Even if you don't use a disclosure script, preparing one involves becoming very familiar with the rules/ processes and your own requirements. Even if a script isn't used, its development is a handy self-awareness process.

Please note: the only disclosure that is required is to a Disability Advisor, and this is treated as confidential within Health, Counselling and Disability Services. These scripts are for situations in which you are voluntarily disclosing to other staff in the university in order to explain or seek adjustments or supports.

Why might you disclose?

Disclosing details of your disability can be confronting, and you need to be aware that the right to disclose is yours. However, some disclosure is often required:

- to request and receive necessary adjustments and/or services;
- to receive legal protection from discrimination;
- to maintain or improve relationships with lecturers/tutors;
- to reduce stress; and
- to appropriately advocate for yourself

Disclosure scripts give you more control over the process.



Steps in creating and delivering a disclosure script

1. Start by clarifying in your own mind, the nature of your disability, your strengths and limitations, and the supports and adjustments you need to study effectively. You can use the self-reflection questions below to guide this.



Describe your disability in simple terms that most people could understand:

What are your top strengths and abilities that relate to your current study?

What are the study duties that could be difficult for you to perform and why?

What are your preferences when it comes to learning?

What are your preferences when it comes to communicating?

What supports and adjustments have been useful for you in the past?

What recommendations has your disability advisor (if you have one) made in relation to the types of supports and accommodations that might help?

Know your rights and responsibilities, try [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

2. Compose your script

A disclosure script consists of 6 main components and is not necessarily particularly long. Whilst the components are presented in a certain order here, you might find the flow of the script works better with a slightly different order.



- a. Greeting/opening – a simple opening or greeting to address the person/context in which your request is being made. It is really helpful to write the topic code.

Example: Hi Professor J, my name is Gareth, I am in your first year psychology topic (topic number). I wanted to have a chat to you about my studies.

- b. A brief description of your disability in a way that people without any medical or psychological knowledge would be able to understand it. Include the main ways that the disability affects your studies (i.e. functional limitations).

Example: I am on the Autism Spectrum which makes social interactions (e.g. group work as part of tutorials) to be quite challenging. I often get quite anxious when invited to participate in the conversations.

- c. The strengths, skills and abilities that you bring to your studies that you use to address these limitations

Example: I find I have excellent attention to detail, which means when I focus on taking notes for the group, I get good feedback from others on how detailed the notes are.

- d. The supports and adjustments that would further assist you in addressing these functional limitations. Include any supporting evidence in your request.

Example: I was hoping the tutor could support me in advocating for me being the note taker during group exercises. I was given this idea by my Disability Advisor.

- e. Finishing statement, perhaps outlining further opportunities to discuss.

Example: I wanted to let you know, so that we could discuss options before the topic starts.

If possible, develop your script with a family member, trusted friend, or disability advisor. A second set of eyes on the script can help you refine it.

3. Rehearse your script

If you are sending your request to your lecturer/ tutor/ academic via email, then rehearsing is not as important. More important in this scenario is ensuring the script is as well-written as possible.

However some find delivering the script verbally, in person, helps build a better relationship with the lecturer/ tutor/ academic in question.

Rehearsal involves saying the script, over and over again, until you are very familiar with it. We still recommend that you have the script written out, if you need to refer back to it when delivering it, but the more familiar you are with it, going in, the more clearly you will present it.

To add a little more pressure to your rehearsal (which makes you better at delivering it), try rehearsing in front of the mirror, or with a friend/ family member. If you feel comfortable asking, seek feedback from your friends/family on how you deliver it, and what improvements could be made.



4. Time to deliver!

If possible, speak to your lecturer/ tutor/ academic in private. Perhaps book a time ahead to speak with them, so they know you are coming.

It is normal to feel nervous when disclosing details about your disability and asking for adjustments and supports. Remember though, you are entitled to such supports and the university is committed to assisting those with disabilities to achieve their study goals.

If delivering the script in person, make sure to take a copy on a card or piece of paper, just in case you get a bit flustered and need to refer to the card. The lecturer/ tutor/ academic will more likely appreciate that you have prepared ahead of time, than be frustrated with your delivery.

As far as possible, stick to the script. It ensures that you don't disclose any more than you feel comfortable with.

Remember to thank the person for their time.

If the conversation/ interaction goes well, you will likely come to some sort of agreement on adjustments and supports to help you. It can be helpful to write a summary email and send it to the lecturer/tutor to check that you both agree on the same adjustments.

If the conversation/ interaction does not go so well, remember that:

- a) You can say you'd like to speak to your disability advisor again, before continuing with the conversation.
- b) You can invite the lecturer/ tutor/ academic to contact the disability office and speak to one of the advisors.
- c) You can ask for another meeting time in a couple of days, and take some time to reflect on the conversation you've just had.

Example scripts

We've prepared a few example scripts to help you get a sense of what they look like. We've used examples of different types of disabilities

Example 1

Hi, I am in your topic this semester and I wanted to let you know that I have a medical condition which sometimes impacts on my study. While I do my best to manage my condition so that it doesn't impact on classes, I have occasions where I need to leave class early, in order to manage my symptoms. I hope this is not too distracting for others, and I will contact the tutor/lecturer afterwards to find out about any work I have missed (and negotiate if I can do some catch up work at home).

I may need to ask for an extension for the essay due in week 8, if my symptoms flare up around that time, but I will let you know closer to the time if that is the case.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any concerns about this, and see my Access Plan attached to this email.

Example 2

Hi, I am excited to be studying at Flinders, and will be in your topic this semester. I wanted you to know that I have Dyslexia, which impacts on how I read and write my work. You may see me using a recording device in lectures, this has some software on it which assists my notetaking as I am not great at writing quickly during lectures and often miss information.

I also take longer to read journals and write assignments, and I may need to ask for an extension for the written essays coming up later in the semester. If I find I need extra time, I will ask through the extension request form on FLO.

When there are a lot of readings in one week, I can get behind as it takes me longer to read them. Would you be able to list which readings are the highest priority each week, so I can make sure I read them first? Please feel free to contact me if you have any concerns about this, and see my Access Plan attached to this email.

Example 3

Hi, I am in your topic this semester. I want you to know I have an Access Plan (see attached). I have a disability which impacts on my fine motor skills. I would like to talk with you about the labs in this topic as I may need to work out a different way to access the experiments, or organise for some specialist equipment to assist me. Could we meet and talk about which tasks may be difficult for me in a lab?

Also, I use a computer and get extra time for exams, could I arrange to have the same for my in-class tests? Thanks.

Example 4

Hi, I am in your topic this semester. I have a medical condition which means I walk with a cane and have difficulty managing stairs. This means I may take longer to get between classes. On Tuesdays and Fridays, there is a 10 minute break to get between classes in different buildings, and I just want you to know I may have to leave a class early, or arrive a bit late due to how long it takes me to move between classes. Could you give me copies of anything I miss if I am late or leave early?
Please let me know if you have any concerns about this.

Find out more

If you want to learn more about preparing disclosure scripts, or your rights and responsibilities in terms of studying with a disability here at Flinders, please contact the Disability Services Office - <http://flinders.edu.au/current-students/healthandcounselling/disabilities.cfm>

You can also use the resources on the ADCET website:

- Disclosure information: <https://www.adcet.edu.au/students-with-disability/disclosure/>
- Information about reasonable adjustments at uni: <https://www.adcet.edu.au/students-with-disability/reasonable-adjustments-disability-specific/>