

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Policy

1. Purpose, Scope and Definitions

The policy, Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities ("Policy") is comprised of two documents: the Policy Document and this Procedures Document. This Procedures Document is intended to support the Policy Document and provides specific information on the decision making process and appeals process related to Academic Accommodations. Definitions for capitalized terms are found in the Policy Document. In the event of a discrepancy between the Policy Document and the Procedures Document, the Policy Document will apply.

1. In accordance with the University's policies and procedures and applicable legislation including the Ontario Human Rights Code, and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, the University of Guelph shall provide reasonable accommodation, short of undue hardship
 2. The University promotes the full participation of students in their academic program. It is recognized that the provision of academic accommodation is a shared accountability and responsibility between the University and the student.
 3. The purpose of this Policy Document is to identify the principles and responsibilities in the provision of academic accommodation for students with disabilities. This Policy does not address accommodation related to lifestyle or quality of life.
 4. In the event of a discrepancy between this Policy Document and the Procedures Document, the Policy Document will apply.
 5. Students studying at the University of Guelph-Humber will be subject to the policies and procedures of Humber College with regards to Academic Accommodations.
 6. The following definitions shall apply in this Policy:
 - "Academic Accommodation" means modification to academic policies, procedures or the educational environment that would result in equal opportunity to attain the same level of performance, or to enjoy the same level of benefits and privileges enjoyed by others, and meets the student's Disability-related needs. Examples of Academic Accommodations available may include, but are not limited to:
 - Advanced provision of reading lists and other course materials to allow for alternate format transcription;
 - Alternate scheduling for the completion of course, project, thesis work, or examinations, including competency examinations;
 - Extensions to program completion time limits;
 - Use of assistive technology in the classroom/laboratory/field (e.g. FM systems worn by Course Instructors);
 - Use of oral and visual language interpreters and/or note takers in the classroom;
 - Use of audio and/or visual recording or webcast of lectures;
 - Use of adaptive technology and alternate format text for written materials;
 - Support for examinations including extra time, a private or semi-private room, use of a computer, adaptive software or word processor, or access to a reader or scribe as needed;
 - Special seating; wheelchair accessible tables; or
 - Adjustment to academic loads.
- "Chair" means head of an academic unit and includes a Department Chair or School Director.
 - "Course Instructor(s)" is defined as the individual(s) teaching the course or coordinating the program; or in the case of graduate students, can include a faculty advisor or advisory committee
 - "Dean" means the dean of the college that has the responsibility for the course or program.
 - "Disability or Disabilities" has the same meaning as under the Ontario Human Rights Code in force and as amended from time to time. Disabilities may include those which are permanent or those which fall under the definition of Temporary Disabilities. Disabilities may include but are not limited to:
 - Learning Disabilities
 - Attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder ("ADHD")
 - Hearing and/or vision impairments
 - Autism Spectrum Disorder
 - Medical disabilities
 - Dexterity or mobility impairments
 - Acquired brain injuries
 - Psychological/emotional disabilities
 - "Diagnostic Information" means the description of a diagnostic procedure, treatment, or underlying cause of a health condition, including a Diagnosis.
 - "Diagnosis" means the identification of a specific disease or disorder as the cause of a set of symptoms.
 - "Essential Requirement" means a task or activity that is core to the specific learning outcomes of a course or program.
 - "Examinations" include but are not limited to midterms, tests, quizzes, lab examinations or final examinations, competency examinations and defences.
 - "In-course Academic Accommodations" means Academic Accommodations for courses in which the student is currently registered.
 - "Interim Academic Accommodations" means appropriate Academic Accommodations offered for up to a maximum of two semesters while a student is in the process of obtaining appropriate supporting documentation. The student may be required to produce evidence that the documentation process is underway.
 - "Learning Disabilities" has the same meaning as found in either:
 - a. the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, as published by the American Psychological Association; or
 - b. the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario; at the discretion of the diagnosing clinician.
 - "Notification" means formal written notification from SAS of the appropriate types of Academic Accommodations.
 - "Regulated Health Professional" has the same meaning found in the Regulated Health Professions Act, in force and as amended from time to time.
 - "Temporary Disability" means a disability that may not be permanent but does not include short-term common ailments or illnesses such as a cold or the flu.

- “SAS” means Student Accessibility Services at the University of Guelph.
- “Supplementary Academic Accommodation” has the meaning found in section 5.3 of the Procedures Document.

More information can be found at: <https://wellness.uoguelph.ca/accessibility/about-us/policy-guidelines/policy-academic-accommodation-students-disabilities/>.

2. Principles for the Provision of Academic Accommodation

1. A student will be required to provide satisfactory documentation to SAS in accordance with section 4 of the Procedures from an appropriate Regulated Health Professional in order to substantiate the existence of a Disability and describe the functional limitations experienced.
2. Students will not be required to disclose Diagnostic Information to Course Instructors in order to receive an Academic Accommodation.
3. A student who is undergoing diagnostic assessment or who needs a reasonable opportunity to acquire documentation in support of Academic Accommodations can request Interim Academic Accommodations.
4. Decisions regarding Academic Accommodations are made on an individual basis and must be consistent with the Essential Requirements of the course or program.
5. A student may request retroactive consideration. Information on these procedures is provided in the academic calendars under the Academic Consideration policy.
6. The ultimate responsibility for the academic programming and educational policy of the University rests with Senate, and nothing in this Policy will be interpreted so as to alter Senate’s jurisdiction.

3. Periodic Review Process

In order to ensure that this policy continues to be effective, it shall be reviewed periodically. The Associate Vice-President Student Affairs is responsible for initiating this review no less than every five years.

4. Relevant Legislation & External Policy

Ontario Human Rights Code: <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90h19/>

5. Related University Policies, Procedures & Documents

1. Diversity & Human Rights (<https://www.uoguelph.ca/diversity-human-rights/>): website includes the University’s Human Rights policy and information about accessibility initiatives at the University.
2. SAS website (<https://wellness.uoguelph.ca/accessibility/>) includes information about how SAS facilitates academic accommodations and the process of registering for services.
3. Information about Academic Consideration can be found as follows: Section VIII “Undergraduate Degree Regulations and Procedures” of the Undergraduate Calendar.

Procedure

1. Purpose, Scope

The policy, Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities (“Policy”) is comprised of two documents: the Policy Document and this Procedures Document. This Procedures Document is intended to support the Policy Document and provides specific information on the decision making process and appeals process related to Academic

Accommodations. Definitions for capitalized terms are found in the Policy Document. In the event of a discrepancy between the Policy Document and the Procedures Document, the Policy Document will apply.

2. Essential Requirements and Academic Accommodation

Decisions concerning specific forms of Academic Accommodation are made with consideration to the Essential Requirements of a specific course or program in order to ensure its integrity. Registration in a course or program does not guarantee the granting of any specific form of Academic Accommodation. Students are expected to contact SAS as early as possible to discuss their accommodation needs if their choices concerning a course or program may be affected by the specific forms of Academic Accommodation granted by the University.

3. Student Accessibility Services (SAS)

Role of SAS

1. SAS facilitates a variety of programs and services to assist students with participating fully in University life and maximizing campus accessibility. These may include:
 - a. confirming whether a student has met the criteria for establishing that a Disability exists and helping to identify appropriate options for Academic Accommodations;
 - b. providing to a Course Instructor, Notifications as to the appropriate types of Academic Accommodation;
 - c. granting common forms of In-Course Academic Accommodations as described in section 5.1 below;
 - d. supporting and facilitating the provision of Academic Accommodations by academic departments;
 - e. acting as a resource for members of the University community about disability related matters that have an impact on equitable participation in academic life; and
 - f. assisting the student in developing strategies for managing daily activities relating to academic life in the context of their disability.

Registration

1. All students who require Academic Accommodation must register with SAS in accordance with this Policy including applicants who submitted information regarding a Disability as part of the Admission process. Submission of information as part of the Admission process does not satisfy registration requirements for SAS.
2. In order to provide Academic Accommodations in a timely fashion, students are expected to observe the following dates:
 - a. First year students must submit a New Student Intake Form (NSIF) by **June 15** prior to commencing their program. It is also recommended that first year students participate in SAS orientation programs offered at the start of each academic year.
 - b. Transfer students who are admitted after **June 15** or who are starting their program in either the winter or summer semester, must submit the NSIF as soon as possible after accepting an offer of admission.
 - c. Students who are already attending the University and are registering with SAS for the first time must submit the NSIF as soon as they are aware that a need for accommodation exists.
 - d. All new students and any returning students who need to meet with an advisor must normally contact SAS by the end of the first week of classes to book an appointment. If there is an immediate need for an accommodation, students are expected to make this known when booking the appointment.

- e. Students who have registered with SAS in a previous semester must reactivate their status within the first 2 weeks of classes for each semester they are enrolled by following instructions on the SAS website or sent to their University email account.
- 3. Efforts will be taken to support students who delay registration with SAS. However, some options may not be available on short notice and may be deferred to a subsequent semester.

SAS Exam Centre

1. Students who have been approved to write Examinations in the SAS Exam Centre must normally book the appropriate date and time with SAS:
 - a. At least 14 days prior to a scheduled midterm examination date, and
 - b. No later than November 1 (Fall semester), March 1 (Winter semester), or July 1 (Summer semester).
2. Where Examinations are written in the SAS Exam Centre, SAS is responsible for working with the academic unit to:
 - a. identify students who will be writing in the SAS Exam Centre at least five working days prior to the scheduled date of the Examination;
 - b. arrange for copies of the Examination to be available in the SAS Exam Centre at least three days before it is to be administered to the student, and returned to the department/school on the first working day following the Examination;
 - c. arrange for Examinations written in the SAS Exam Centre to be administered at the same time as the rest of the class, except when alternate timing has been approved by the Course Instructor. Examples of when this may be necessary include but are not limited to when:
 - i. granting additional time causes the scheduling of two Examinations to come into conflict;
 - ii. a Disability precludes the student from being able to write more than one Examination per day;
 - iii. medication required by the student affects the student's ability to function at particular times of day; or
 - iv. Examinations are scheduled outside of regularly scheduled class times and/or the SAS Exam Centre is closed.

4. Documentation Requirements

1. Students requesting Academic Accommodation must provide appropriate documentation to SAS in accordance with this section. The documentation must be from an appropriate Regulated Health Professional who has the authority to diagnose the particular Disability. In the absence of current documentation identified in section 4.2 below, students can request Interim Academic Accommodations
2. Documentation must be current according to the following standards:
 - a. Learning Disabilities and ADHD must have been assessed at age 18 or older, or within the last three years;
 - b. all other Disabilities must be assessed within the timeframe that the student experiences a functional limitation for which an Academic Accommodation is needed; and
 - c. documentation may need to be renewed as appropriate to reflect the student's on-going need for Academic Accommodation.
3. Documentation must be comprehensive and provide information regarding the student's functional limitations in a university setting. A Functional Assessment form is used for all forms of Disabilities except for Learning Disabilities (see section 4.4 below).

Functional Assessment forms are available on the SAS website. All documentation must include the following minimal information:

- a. a statement of the nature of the Disability (a specific diagnosis is optional but not required);
 - b. information on the severity, duration and intensity of the Disability;
 - c. a description of functional limitations; and
 - d. whether the Disability is permanent or whether it falls under the definition of a Temporary Disability.
4. Students with Learning Disabilities must provide documentation in the form of a psychoeducational assessment report ("Assessment") that conforms to established standards. The Assessment must contain but is not limited to the following information:
 - a. The credentials and signature of the assessor, who must be a registered psychologist or psychological associate;
 - b. A description of the procedures used for the Assessment, including relevant contextual information;
 - c. Evidence that appropriate psychometric testing has been employed, including instruments that have been validated against adult norms;
 - d. Information about the severity of the Functional Limitations experienced by the student;
 - e. Ruling out of other possible explanations for the observed assessment results (differential diagnosis);
 - f. An indication that the results are believed to be a reasonable representation of the student's normal abilities; and
 - g. Confirmation that a specific learning disability exists.
 5. Documentation may also include recommendations as to the types of Academic Accommodations that might address a student's specific functional limitations. However, the University retains ultimate decision-making authority as to which forms of Academic Accommodations may be granted.

5. Requests for In-Course Academic Accommodation

1. Subject to appropriate documentation, requests for certain common forms of In-Course Academic Accommodation can be granted directly by SAS. These include but are not limited to requests for:
 - a. note taking;
 - b. arrangements for appropriate seating in a classroom; or
 - c. supports for Examinations that are administered by the SAS Exam Centre such as extra time, use of a private or semi-private room, use of a computer, adaptive software or word processor, or access to a reader or scribe.
2. Students requesting In-Course Academic Accommodation are responsible for submitting their requests in accordance with deadlines as provided on the SAS website.
3. Requests for In-Course Academic Accommodations not in subsection 5.1 are considered "Supplementary Academic Accommodations" and are made directly to Course Instructors or the appropriate University units with the support of SAS. Examples may include but are not limited to:
 - a. audio recording of lectures;
 - b. use of memory aids or calculators for Examinations;
 - c. additional time for assignments, or alternate scheduling of Examinations;
 - d. advanced access to information about readings and assignments; or
 - e. alternative methods of assessing Essential Requirements.

4. SAS provides support to students in learning to negotiate on their own behalf. To that end, SAS encourages students to negotiate directly for Supplementary Academic Accommodations, when appropriate. At the student's request, SAS may provide assistance in requesting Supplementary Academic Accommodations.
5. Course Instructors are encouraged to contact SAS to discuss any requested Supplementary Academic Accommodation that is not consistent with the Notification, or if there are questions related to the impact of the Supplementary Academic Accommodation on the Essential Requirements of a course or program.
6. If SAS supports the need to have textbooks produced in alternate format (e.g. audio books, Braille or e-text), students must make the necessary arrangements directly with Library Accessibility Services. Students are encouraged to make these arrangements early since it can take 4 to 6 weeks to acquire alternate format text.

6. Supplementary Academic Accommodation Decision Process

1. If consensus on Supplementary Academic Accommodation cannot be reached between the student, the Course Instructor and SAS, then the Course Instructor shall consult as follows:
 - a. for undergraduate students, with the Chair or designate; or
 - b. for graduate students, with the Graduate Program Coordinator.
2. If, after the consultation described above, consensus still cannot be reached on the Supplementary Academic Accommodation to be provided, a report will be issued within 5 working days ("Report") as follows:
 - a. for undergraduate students, the Chair shall provide a Report to the Dean (or designate).
 - b. for graduate students, the Graduate Program Coordinator shall provide a Report to both the Assistant Vice-President (Graduate Studies) and the College Dean (or designate) who has oversight responsibility for the graduate program.
3. The Report will include the Notification from SAS, the type(s) of Supplementary Academic Accommodation being requested, and the rationale for not granting the request including any concerns regarding its impact on the Essential Requirements of the course or program, if applicable. The Report will also include information about any alternative forms of Supplementary Academic Accommodations that have been considered.
4. Within 5 working days of the receipt of the Report, the Dean (or designate) and when applicable, the A.V.P. Graduate Students shall make a decision on the type(s) of Supplementary Academic Accommodation to be granted and advise the parties in writing.

7. Appeal Process

1. Decisions by SAS Advisors regarding the In-Course Academic Accommodations under section 5.1 may be appealed to the Manager, SAS.
2. Decisions by SAS regarding Supplementary Academic Accommodations it will support under Section 5.3 may be appealed to the Director, Student Wellness.
3. Decisions by the Dean (or designate) and when applicable, the A.V.P. Graduate Students under 6.4 may be appealed by the student to the Senate Committee on Student Petitions ("Petitions") in accordance with Petitions' Bylaws.