

Guidelines and Procedures on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities



The purpose of these guidelines and procedures is to support the implementation of the Policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities (Policy 4.4), as approved by Senate. In the event of a discrepancy between the Policy and these Guidelines, the Policy will apply.

The provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student requesting accommodation.

The University has a responsibility to:

- provide reasonable accommodations, up to the point of undue hardship, to an otherwise qualified students with a disability;
- maintain confidentiality of the information obtained.

Legal Framework:

The guidelines shall conform with provisions of:

- the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
- the Prince Edward Island Human Rights Act

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions shall apply in these guidelines and procedures:

“Academic Integrity” is defined as the essential academic requirements of a course or program which includes but is not limited to the knowledge and skills which are necessary to meet the learning objectives.

“Disabilities” shall have the same meaning as under the *Canadian Human Rights Act* and may include but is not limited to:

- learning disabilities
- attention disabilities
- sensory disabilities
- medical disabilities
- physical disabilities
- acquired brain injuries
- psychological/emotional disabilities

“Examinations” include but are not limited to midterms, tests, quizzes, written lab examinations or final examinations.

“Undue Hardship”

Although undue hardship must be considered in the context of each individual case, a finding of undue hardship could be supported in the following circumstances:

(i) financial cost is such that the operation of the University and/or its programs would be fundamentally diminished or a program or service would cease to exist due to the financial burden of the accommodation.

(ii) the accommodation unreasonably impedes the ability of other students to pursue academic studies; or

(iii) when accommodation alternatives would result either in lowering academic standards or requiring substantial alteration of essential course or program requirements.

The onus is on the University to prove "undue hardship."

REGISTRATION WITH WEBSTER ACADEMIC SERVICES

Students with disabilities who have been admitted to the University and who self-identify as requiring academic accommodation must register with Webster Academic Services.

DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Students requesting academic accommodation must provide appropriate documentation satisfactory to the University. The assessment must be comprehensive and reflect the student's learning needs in a university setting and support the requested accommodation. Specific documentation requirements are as follows:

- a) Documentation for students with learning disabilities must include a psycho-educational assessment report that contains a diagnosis of a learning disability. It must be completed and signed by a registered psychologist or a registered psychological associate to support these requests.
- b) Documentation to support medical or psychological disabilities must be from a qualified professional(s) and include: a statement of the diagnosis and nature of the disability; information on the severity, duration and intensity of the disability; and, whether the disability is permanent or temporary.

Documentation will need to be renewed as appropriate to reflect the student's on-going need for academic accommodation.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

Examples of academic accommodations available may include, but are not limited to:

- 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 of lectures;
- Use of adaptive technology;
- Support for examinations including extra time, a distraction free environment, use of a computer, adaptive software or word processor.

- Special seating; wheelchair accessible tables;
- Adjustments to lighting.

PROVISION OF ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

Requests for certain forms of academic consideration can be accommodated directly by Webster Academic Services (WAS). These include requests for:

- student mentoring;
- provision of tutors;
- notetaking, scribes;
- alternatives to written tests (e.g., oral exam, alternate formats such as braille, large text, etc.) where appropriate;
- arrangements for appropriate seating in a classroom;
- the writing of Examinations at WAS Exam Centre to facilitate the use of extra time, distraction free environment, use of a computer, adaptive software or word processor.

Requests for certain forms of academic consideration can be requested through Webster Academic Services and may be granted without compromising academic integrity and approved by faculty. These include requests for:

- 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.

Students registered with Webster Academic Services who need to have textbooks scanned into a Kurzweil or MP3 file must make the request directly to Accessibility Services. There are set times that students will be able to access a student assistant to assist them with this.

EXAMINATIONS AND THE WEBSTER ACADEMIC SERVICES (WAS)

Many students with physical, learning or other types of disabilities who have supporting medical documentation require some form of exam accommodation (e.g., distraction free environment, extended time, use of computer, adaptive software or word processor). Often this results in the exam being written with Webster Academic Services. In such cases, the procedures listed below are followed:

- While students do not have to disclose their disability to instructors, they are required to inform them of their need for accommodations;
- Students are required to provide WAS with their test and exam schedules at the beginning of the semester;
- Students are required to schedule their final exams with WAS, as soon as the final exam schedule is released or at least two weeks prior to the first day of the final exam session;
- Throughout the semester, if there is a test or exam scheduled that WAS was not informed of at the beginning of the semester, the student will need to notify WAS at least one week prior to the test or exam date;
- Approximately one week prior to the exam, WAS will contact the

department and arrange for the exam to be delivered either in person or electronically to WAS;

- When a student arrives for an exam, a proctor will escort the student to a room and give him/her the exam;
- Exams taken at WAS are carefully invigilated. All materials taken into the exam rooms, such as pencil cases, are checked. Students are also regularly checked during the exam. All personal belongings of the student are kept with the exam proctor;
- After the exam is completed, it is secured under lock and key;
- Exams are returned to the departments by our senior student assistants on either the day of or the day after the exams are written.

* All students registered with Webster Academic Services will be given a copy of UPEI Statement on Academic Dishonesty - Regulation 20, which outlines how allocations of academic dishonesty will be mitigated.