

University of Prince Edward Island	Policy No: admss_gn10002	Revision No. 2
Policy Title: Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities		Page 1 of 5
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Authority: Senate	Responsibility: Vice-President, Academic	Access: W

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The University of Prince Edward Island, founded on the tradition of liberal education, exists to encourage and assist people to acquire the skills, knowledge, and understanding necessary for critical and creative thinking, and thus prepare them to contribute to their own betterment and that of society through the development of their full potential.
- 1.2 To accomplish these ends, the University is a community of scholars whose primary tasks are to teach and to learn, to engage in scholarship and research, and to offer service for the benefit of our Island and beyond.
- 1.3 The University encourages the full participation of all students, including students with disabilities, as members of the University community, and strives to ensure fair and consistent treatment, and access to University services, programs and facilities for all.
- 1.4 Recognizing its moral and legal duty to provide reasonable accommodation to the point of undue hardship, the University is committed to providing equal opportunities for students with disabilities, within a supportive and challenging environment and consistent with academic principles.

2. Scope

- 2.1 The Policy shall apply to:
 - 2.1.1 all full-time, part-time and unclassified students self-identified as having a documented disability, and who are registered in credit or non-credit courses at the University of Prince Edward Island; and
 - 2.1.2 persons who have a self-declared and documented disability and have formally applied to the University as prospective students.
- 2.2 The Policy shall conform to provisions of:
 - 2.2.1 the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms; and
 - 2.2.2 the Prince Edward Island Human Rights Act.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 *Disability* - For the purpose of this policy, the term disability shall be defined as a functional limitation caused by a long-term or recurring physical, sensory, mental, psychiatric or learning impairment that restricts the ability of a person to perform the daily activities necessary to participate in learning or daily living at UPEI.

- 3.2 *Academic Accommodation* - A modification or extension of the Universities' resources, or a variation of teaching or evaluation procedures, which accommodate the needs of a student with a disability without compromising academic integrity. Accommodations are accessed through Accessibility Services on an individual basis. Examples of academic accommodation are listed in the attached document, *Procedures and Guidelines on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities*.
- 3.3 *Academic Integrity* - 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.
- 3.4 *Reasonable Accommodation* - Adjusting a course, program, policy, procedure, or the physical environment that adversely affects a student with a disability without changing essential educational requirements. Such accommodations must be provided in a way that most respects the dignity of the student with a disability to the point of undue hardship to the institution.
- 3.5 *Undue Hardship*¹ - Although undue hardship must be considered in the context of each individual case, a finding of undue hardship could be supported in the following four (4) circumstances:
- 3.5.1 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;
 - 3.5.2 there is a risk to public safety or a substantial risk of personal injury to the student with a disability;
 - 3.5.3 the accommodation unreasonably impedes the ability of other students to pursue academic studies; or
 - 3.5.4 when accommodation alternatives would result either in lowering academic standards or requiring substantial alteration of essential course or program requirements.
 - 3.5.5 Significant costs related to a requested accommodation shall be considered in the context of the University as a whole, not on the basis of a department, division, faculty, school, or program.
 - 3.5.6 The onus is on the University to prove undue hardship.
- 3.6 *University Community* - The University of Prince Edward Island as defined by the University Act, R.S.P.E.I. 1988, includes all members involved in the provision of University-related services including teaching, advising, administering and other support services (e.g. instructors, administrators, counsellors, librarians, and support staff).

4. **Responsibility**

- 4.1 The Office of the Registrar is responsible for decisions respecting admission to the University. Information on students that self-declare a special need upon admission will be shared with Accessibility Services, so that an accommodations plan can be set up on a timely basis.

¹ PEI Human Rights Commission: Duty to Accommodate

- 4.2 The provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student requesting accommodation.
- 4.3 Accessibility Services (AS), a function of Student Affairs, is responsible for the coordination of accommodations for students with disabilities.
- 4.4 The Access-Ability Committee, reporting to the Manager of Student Affairs, advises the University community on issues pertaining to students who have disabilities.

5. Policy

- 5.1 The University of Prince Edward Island will undertake to provide reasonable accommodation to all otherwise qualified students who have a disability.
- 5.2 Students experiencing barriers to participation in a University activity due to a characteristic protected under human rights legislation are entitled to accommodation to reduce or eliminate such barriers up to the point of undue hardship, as set out in this Policy.
- 5.3 All members of the University community share in the responsibility for compliance with this Policy.
- 5.4 The provision of accommodations that permits students with a disability to access courses shall not in any manner reduce the standards, academic or otherwise, of the University.
- 5.5 Students with a disability who seek accommodations at the University of Prince Edward Island are responsible for bringing the request to the attention of the appropriate personnel in Accessibility Services, and for providing the relevant documentation of their disability in a timely manner (see attached document *Procedures and Guidelines on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities: Documentation Requirements*). Delays in notifying Accessibility Services personnel may result in accommodation requests not being processed in time for the current term/course in which accommodation is sought.
- 5.6 Accommodation decisions will be reviewed on a regular basis and adjusted to the student's current circumstances where necessary.
- 5.7 Procedures and guidelines have been developed which outline the process of reaching a reasonable accommodation with the participation of all relevant parties. Please see the attached document.
- 5.8 Admissions:
 - 5.8.1 Academically qualified students with disabilities, generally, will have access to the University's educational programs, facilities, and services.
 - 5.8.2 Students with a disability who meet the current admission requirements for entrance to the University of Prince Edward Island will follow the current admission procedures.
 - 5.8.3 Students with a disability who do not meet the current admission requirements have the same recourse as other applicants in that they may appeal, through documentation, to the Admissions Committee. Decisions of the Admissions Committee are final.
 - 5.8.4 Students with a disability shall recognize that admission to the University does not in and of

itself guarantee that accommodation for a disability will be made.

5.9 Accommodations:

5.9.1 The University seeks to remove physical, attitudinal and systemic barriers that may impede or prevent academically qualified students with disabilities from participating fully in University life. The University understands that persons with disabilities may have different methods for achieving success and that effective accommodation may include the following variations such as accessible curricula, delivery and evaluation methodology.

5.9.2 It is recognized that students with documented disabilities may require certain accommodations not required by other students in order to have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their achievement of academic objectives. Nevertheless, it is expected that students with disabilities will satisfy the academic standards of the University, as defined by the University regulations.

5.10 Responsibility of the University

5.10.1 The University has a responsibility to:

- 5.10.1.1 ensure that persons with a disability are given equal consideration for admission;
- 5.10.1.2 provide reasonable accommodations, up to the point of undue hardship, to an otherwise qualified student with a disability;
- 5.10.1.3 recognize the shared responsibility of students, Course Instructors, Departments, Schools, Faculties, Accessibility Services and staff in exercising flexibility and creativity in the provision of academic accommodations;
- 5.10.1.4 review documentation to ensure that recommendations and decisions regarding accommodations are based on appropriate medical assessments and/or psycho-educational information;
- 5.10.1.5 develop an individualized accommodation plan in collaboration with the student and any medical and/or psychological professionals that would outline the student's particular needs;
- 5.10.1.6 provide information and support for students with a disability in a timely manner;
- 5.10.1.7 ensure that courses or programs are accessible to students with disabilities;
- 5.10.1.8 promote an attitude of respect within the university for persons with disabilities;
- 5.10.1.9 promote an awareness of disability issues and acceptance of people with disabilities to faculty, staff and students, and educate them about the University's disability policies, programs, and procedures; and
- 5.10.1.10 maintain confidentiality of the information obtained in accordance with University policies ("*Disclosure and Protection of Student Information*" and "*Personal Information and Privacy Policy*"). Medical documentation and personal information cannot be shared without student consent.

5.11 Responsibility of the Student

5.11.1 A student with a disability at the University of Prince Edward Island who seeks assistance and/or accommodation has a responsibility to:

- 5.11.1.1 initiate contact with Accessibility Services on campus and make the nature of the

- 5.11.1.2 disability and needs for accommodation known; provide the necessary documentation. The University does not provide or assume the cost of diagnostic services;
- 5.11.1.3 contact Accessibility Services at the beginning of each term to set up exams and/or non-academic accommodation;
- 5.11.1.4 inform Accessibility Services if there are any changes in accommodation needs in a timely manner; and
- 5.11.1.5 undertake a reasonable amount of self-advocacy. While students do not have to disclose their disability to instructors, they are encouraged to inform them of their need for accommodations.

5.12 Use of Service Animals

- 5.12.1 Persons with disabilities accompanied by a certified service animal may access University-owned or operated premises that are open to the public or other third parties, and may keep the animal with them except where excluded by law;
- 5.12.2 Where the service animal is disruptive and may affect the health and safety of other persons, and all efforts have been made to meet the needs of both parties, the University has the right to exclude the service animal.

5.13 Appeals

- 5.13.1 Students who believe they have not been treated fairly in accordance with this Policy respecting academic accommodation should first discuss the matter with the Course Instructor and the Coordinator of Accessibility Services.
- 5.13.2 If consensus cannot be reached between the student, Instructor and designate of Accessibility Services, the process for dispute resolution is defined in the attached document, *Procedures and Guidelines on Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities*.
- 5.13.4 Academic Appeals should be undertaken in accordance with Academic Regulation 12: Academic Appeals.

6. **Review**

- 6.1 This policy will be reviewed every five (5) years.