

Procedures and Guidelines on Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities January 2023

These procedures and guidelines support the implementation of the policy on *Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities*, as approved by the Senate. The policy will apply if there is a discrepancy between the policy and these guidelines.

The provision of academic accommodations 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 student with a disability; and
- Maintain confidentiality of the information obtained.

Legal Framework

The guidelines shall conform to the provisions of

- The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms; and
- The Prince Edward Island Human Rights Act.

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions shall apply to these Procedures and Guidelines:

Academic Integrity – the essential academic requirements of a course or program which includes, but is not limited to, the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the learning objectives.

Disability – as stated in the Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities 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 the person to perform the daily activities necessary to participate in learning or daily living at UPEI.

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

Undue Hardship - although undue hardship must be considered in the context of each case, a finding of undue hardship could be supported in the following circumstances:

1. The 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;
2. There is a risk to public safety or a substantial risk of personal injury to the student with a disability;
3. The accommodation unreasonably impedes the ability of other students to pursue academic studies; or
4. When accommodation alternatives would result either in lowering academic standards or requiring substantial alteration of essential course or program requirements.

Significant costs related to a requested accommodation shall be considered in the context of the university, not based on a department, division, faculty, school, or program.

The onus is on the University to prove undue hardship.

REGISTRATION WITH ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

To receive academic or physical accommodations, students must register with Accessibility Services.

DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

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

1. Documentation for students with learning disabilities must include a psychoeducational 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.
2. Documentation to support medical or psychological disabilities must be from a qualified professional 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 to reflect the students' ongoing need for academic accommodations.

Documentation must be current.

- As psychoeducational assessment must be within five years from the date of assessment;
- For returning students whose conditions are stable, the original supporting medical documentation will meet the requirements;
- When new or returning students' functional abilities show significant change, new supporting documentation may be required;
- In certain circumstances, a student will be provided accommodation on a limited basis while obtaining documentation.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

Reasonable accommodation will be provided to students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the essential educational requirements of an academic course/program as determined by the University.

Academic accommodations may include but are not limited to

- An adaptation to a component of a program or alternative forms of evaluation (assigning a term paper instead of an oral presentation to a student with a speech impairment or autism);

- Use of assistive technology in the classroom/laboratory/field (e.g. FM systems worn by course instructor)
- Use of oral and visual language interpreters, educational attendants, and/or note-takers in the classroom;
- Use of audio and/or visual recording of lectures;
- Support for examinations, including extra time, a distraction-reduced environment, and the use of a computer, adaptive software and a word processor;
- Special seating or accessible tables; or
- Lighting adjustments.

PROVISION OF ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

Accessibility Services supports students with documented visible, invisible, and/or temporary disabilities.

Accommodations and Services include:

- Campus Accessibility
- Confidential consultations
- Test, exam and classroom accommodations
- Assistance with grants
- Assistance with adaptive technology
- Note-taking, tutoring, mentoring
- Use of a scribe or oral testing
- Learning -strategy support
- Assistance with self-advocacy
- Transition planning with high schools and families
- Textbook to audio/pdf

The Human Rights Guidelines for Accommodating Post-Secondary Students (May 2017) state that:

Accommodation does not mean that education providers must lower their academic standards. On the contrary, students with disabilities are expected to develop the same essential skills as their classmates. How those skills are developed may differ; however, if a specific course requirement poses particular difficulty for students with disabilities, the education provider should examine that requirement and determine whether it is essential to meet the educational objectives of the program and whether it would be possible to waive or modify the requirement without affecting those objectives.

Ultimately, an education provider should develop a curriculum with an eye toward inclusion. This process may include putting course materials online, ensuring they are available in alternate formats from the outset or implementing universal design principles. By designing the program to permit students with disabilities to participate fully, an education provider can promote an inclusive educational environment and make the accommodation process smoother for both the provider and the students. The education provider should also guide its instructors and support staff in working with students with disabilities to provide an environment that is welcoming, inclusive, and free from discrimination.

Recommendations from the students' documentation may necessitate academic accommodations on a case-by-case basis, and collaboration between the course instructor, the student, and Accessibility Services will be required. These include requests for

- Advanced provision of reading lists, class notes and other course materials (e.g. accessible PDFs);
- Alternate scheduling for the completion of the course, project, thesis work, or examinations, including competency examinations;
- Waving the participation requirement by re-waiting for other evaluation methodology or by the provision of an alternative assignment;
- Extensions to incompletes.

THE REGISTRATION PROCESS FOR ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

- Students will make appointments directly or will be referred throughout the year. Therefore, intake is a continuous process.
- Documentation will be reviewed, and individualized accommodation plans will be developed.
- When necessary, referrals will be made and may include psychological assessments, academic or health-related supports, counselling, tutoring, mentoring, learning strategists, educational attendants or external services.
- Once a student registers with Accessibility Services, they are required to submit their [Student Accommodation Form](#) to their case manager. Once received, an email will be sent to each instructor/professor outlining approved classroom and exam accommodation needs.
- It is essential to know that the student is not required to disclose their disability, nor should the course instructor request this of the student. The medical documentation has been reviewed and verified by the Accessibility Services staff.

EXAM ACCOMMODATIONS

Students registered with Accessibility Services (with supporting medical documentation) require some form of exam accommodation (e.g. distraction-reduced environment, additional time, adaptive technology, word processor, stand-up desk, low lighting). Often this results in the exam being written with Accessibility Services at one of our testing locations - DH 111, RL 304, or AVC 217S.

- Students are required to schedule each of their tests and exams on Access Deck at least seven days before each test or exam.
- Students are encouraged to schedule tests and exams as soon as they are available or made aware.
- Students must schedule their final exams with Accessibility Services as soon as the final exam schedule is released. The specific deadline will be sent by email.
- Approximately five days before the test or exam, Accessibility Services will contact the instructor/professor and arrange for the test or exam to be delivered either in person or electronically to Accessibility Services at least one business day before the test or exam time. These documents can be sent to astesting@upei.ca
- Once the student arrives for an exam, the proctor will escort the student to an exam room and provide them with the exam.

- If a student arrives more than 30 minutes late, based on [Regulation 13 - Examination Regulations](#), they may not be able to write their exam. The professor will be contacted to determine if the student is eligible to take the exam.
- Exams taken at Accessibility Services are carefully invigilated. All materials taken into the exam rooms, such as pencil cases, are checked. Students are also regularly checked upon during the exam. All student personal belongings, including all electronic devices, are kept with the exam proctor.
- After the exam is completed, it is secured under lock and key.
- Completed exams can be picked up from Dalton Hall 111 Monday to Friday, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Accommodation Appeals

If consensus cannot be reached between the student, instructor, and designate of Accessibility Services on an accommodation request, the following process for dispute resolution will be followed:

- Appeals of decisions on academic matters other than grades may be made through the Registrar to the Senate Academic and Student Discipline Appeals Committee.
- An appeal must be made in writing, including all supporting documentation, and be submitted within 15 business days of the date of the decision.
- All committee decisions shall be final and binding, subject to a student's right to appeal to the Board of Governors pursuant to the University Act.

Academic Appeals

The Policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities states that students have the right to appeal under [Regulation 12 - Academic Appeals](#).

The Department of Student Affairs and Accessibility Services are available for consultations regarding various ways and options available to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to contact us with any questions related to the accommodation practices, student services, and supports offered at the University of Prince Edward Island