



THE USE OF PERSONAL ASSISTIVE DEVICES GUIDELINES

Contact Officer

Accessibility Coordinator

Purpose

The Use of Personal Assistive Devices Guidelines have been created to support the Queen's Accessibility Policy.

Queen's University recognizes that some persons with disabilities may use personal assistive devices while accessing goods, services, or facilities, excepting in circumstances where the use of a personal assistive device contravenes existing policies and/or legislation governing the delivery and/or use of particular goods, services, or facilities.

Definitions

A personal assistive device is any device that is used, designed, made or adapted to assist persons with disabilities in performing various, everyday tasks such as moving, communicating, reading, writing or lifting.

They aid the person with a disability maintain their independence and dignity at home, at work, or in the community.

Ontario Regulation 191/11 of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005:

- "mobility aid" means a device used to facilitate the transport, in a seated posture, of a person with a disability O. Reg. 191/11 s. 2
- "mobility assistive device" means a cane, walker or similar aid O. Reg. 191/11 s. 2
- "medical aid" means an assistive device, including respirators and portable oxygen supplies. O. Reg. 191/11, s. 44 (4)

Personal assistive devices cover a broad range of products including but not limited to mobility aides, white canes, assistive listening devices, microphones, oxygen tanks, computers (including laptops, tablets) that may also include adaptive software, smartphones, other electronic communication devices, and global position systems (GPS).

Guideline

Regarding the use of personal assistive devices:

- 1) It is the responsibility of persons with a disability to ensure their own assistive device is operated in a safe and controlled manner at all times.
- 2) Persons with disabilities are entitled to use personal assistive devices while accessing goods, services, or facilities, excepting in situations where the use of the device contravenes policies and/or legislation governing the delivery of particular services. For

example, the use of one's laptop may be restricted when writing examinations unless individualized, specific accommodations have been previously arranged through Queen's Student Accessibility Services (QSAS).

- 3) There are circumstances under which assistive devices should be made available to persons with disabilities to enable them to access the University's goods, services, or facilities. For example, QSAS and the Adaptive Technology Centre (ATC) makes available assistive listening devices available for short-term loan to persons with disabilities. ¹
- 4) When assistive devices are made available by the University, Queen's must ensure that key employees are trained in the use of those assistive devices that may be used by persons with disabilities while accessing materials or services (e.g. assistive listening devices or lifts). O. Reg. 191/11, s. 80.49 (2)3.
- 5) Persons with disabilities are entitled to confidentiality and the protection of their privacy and are not required to disclose to members of the University community information about their disability and/or the need for a personal assistive device, unless such information is required by QSAS, ATC, Human Resources or other units or persons as appropriate for the purposes of creating and implementing an individualized accommodation plan.
- 6) Faculty, staff and other individuals (for example, guest lecturers, third party contractors, entertainers, etc.) engaged in the delivery of goods or services on behalf of the University are required to cooperate with the use of a personal assistive device for reasons of improving access to the University's goods or services. For example, lecturers should cooperate when asked by an audience member to wear a microphone or an assistive listening device. While individuals should not ask about a person's disability or their need for the device, they are encouraged to ask questions about the device to ensure its correct use.
- 7) Use of laptops/tablets in the classroom - Laptops are sometimes considered personal assistive devices and some students with disabilities use a laptop computer for reasons of a disability. Examples include:
 - a. Students with vision loss or learning disabilities may use laptops equipped with screen reading technology
 - b. Students with disabilities may need laptops equipped with various assistive technologies to access their course material in an alternate format ²
 - c. Students with vision loss may use laptops equipped with magnifying technology
 - d. Students with physical disabilities may take notes more easily with a laptop than by handwriting
 - e. Students with hearing loss may participate in classroom interactions through the services of a note taker who records notes on a laptop which are then displayed simultaneously on the student's laptop

All faculty members are required to accommodate students with disabilities who use laptops for reasons of a disability. However, requiring students to disclose their need to use a laptop for disability-related reasons and consequently identifying them in the classroom poses a significant threat to the right of students to dignified participation in the University community.

Today, much of the course and learning material is made available online through Learning Management Systems. Together with the fact that more students access this material and take notes using their tablets and laptops, students learning styles have evolved to use technology during lectures.

In light of the University's commitment to advancing accessibility for persons with disabilities by preventing the creation of new and arbitrary barriers, faculty members should, therefore, carefully consider any restrictions on the general use of laptops in the classroom.

Related Policies / Procedures

[Accessibility Policy](#)

[Queen's Policy Concerning Students with Disabilities](#)

[Academic Accommodations for Students Policy](#)

[Academic Accommodations for Students Procedure](#)

[Disability Accommodations Statement](#)

[Human Resources Accommodation of Disabilities in the Workplace Policy](#)

Links

[Ontario Regulation 191/11 of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#)

¹ For more information on the assistive devices that the University makes available for persons with disabilities, please visit the ATC's website at: <http://queensu.ca/atc/adaptive-technology-lab/specialized-software-and-assistive-devices> .

² More information on various assistive technologies and alternate formats are available on the Accessibility Hub website: <http://queensu.ca/accessibility/how-info/what-are-alternate-formats> .

| | |
|--|---|
| Date Approved | <i>Year Month Day</i> |
| Approval Authority | VPOC |
| Related Policies, Procedures and Guidelines | <u>Accessibility Policy</u> <u>Queen's Policy Concerning Students with Disabilities</u> <u>Academic Accommodations for Students Policy</u> <u>Academic Accommodations for Students Procedure</u> <u>Disability Accommodations Statement</u> <u>Human Resources Accommodation of Disabilities in the Workplace Policy</u> |