

Policy



Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Category: *Senate*
Approval: *Senate*
Responsibility: *Provost and V-P (Academic)*
Date: *November 1, 2016:*
Date of last revision:n/a

Definitions:

“academic accommodation” means any adaptation that reduces or eliminates barriers to participation which arises when a student with a disability interacts with the academic environment.

Academic accommodations are individually determined and may include teaching and learning accommodations (e.g. note-taking), assessment and evaluation accommodations (e.g. private space to write exams), environmental accommodations (strategic seating), and auxiliary services and supports (e.g. sign language interpreters, alternate format text, assistive technology).

Academic accommodations are provided when functional limitations arise from a disability and create a barrier in the academic environment. Depending on the disability, which may be permanent or temporary, functional limitations may be intermittent.

Academic accommodations are granted on a permanent (i.e. for the duration of the academic program), interim (i.e. while further documentation is being sought from a regulated health care professional), temporary (i.e. for a limited time) or retroactive (i.e. after a test, evaluation, assignment deadline has passed) basis with supporting documentation. All requests for academic accommodation are assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Academic accommodations provide equal access to learning and services. They do not guarantee a level of achievement. They do not interfere with the university’s ability to appropriately assess the articulated essential learning outcomes of the course or program. They adhere to all academic standards and to the university’s academic integrity policies.

“disability” means:

1. any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
2. a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
3. a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
4. a mental disorder;
5. an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

per Section 10 (1) of the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, 1990

“documentation” means written information from a regulated health care professional verifying that the student has functional limitations which are the result of a temporary or permanent disability, that may be continuous or episodic, or that the student’s symptoms are being monitored in the health care professional’s belief that the functional limitations being experienced by the student are related to a disability. Disclosure of a specific disability or diagnosis to Queen’s Student Accessibility Services is not required.

Documentation requirements for disabilities are posted to the Queen’s Student Accessibility Services ([QSAS website](#)).

“essential academic requirements and standards” means the knowledge and/or skill which must be acquired and/or demonstrated for a student to successfully meet the learning outcomes or degree level requirements of a particular course or program.

“educators” means all individuals who participate in the creation, development or delivery of materials, activities and assessments for learning for Queen’s students. Educators include academic faculty and non-academic staff involved in the delivery of academic curriculum as well as professional learning instructors, graduate supervisors and developers who work with staff, faculty, and other Queen’s personnel.

“functional limitations” means restrictions in an individual’s functioning that hinder the ability to perform tasks or activities used in daily life.

“regulated health care professional” is a professional who is licensed to provide a diagnosis or comprehensively assess and manage the disability or health condition in the course of providing health care services. See [QSAS documentation requirements](#) for more information.

“undue hardship” means the point to which accommodations must be provided by an institution for students with disabilities under the Ontario *Human Rights Code*. The following elements may be considered in determining if providing an accommodation would cause undue hardship:

- (i) The cost of providing the accommodation;
- (ii) The availability of outside sources of funding, if any; and
- (iii) Health and safety requirements, if any.

Inconvenience, potential negative reaction from faculty, staff or other students, or third party preferences are not considered in the test of undue hardship.

Purpose/Reason for Policy:

To outline the university’s approach to providing appropriate academic accommodations for students with disabilities as part of the university’s commitment to accessibility and equity.

Scope of this Policy:

This policy applies to undergraduate and graduate students, enrolled in academic courses or activities for credit at Queen’s University, including those studying on a full or part-time basis, on exchange, or through other international agreements, who:

- have documentation from a regulated health care professional(s) in the applicable field(s) verifying that the student has functional limitations due to a disability or diagnosed health condition, or
- whose symptoms are being monitored in the health care professional’s belief that the functional limitations being experienced by the student are related to a disability or diagnosed health condition.

This policy applies to all students engaged in academic activities at the university, inclusive of classes, laboratory work, research, examinations, fieldwork, and placements. Where a student is both an employee and student of the university, this policy only applies to those activities that are associated with their academic pursuits. For information concerning accommodations relating to employment, please see the university’s [Accommodation of Disabilities in the Workplace Policy](#).

Policy Statement:

Queen’s University is committed to fostering a welcoming culture that facilitates the inclusion and integration of students with disabilities into the university community.

This policy reflects the university’s commitment to identifying, removing and preventing barriers to the full academic participation of students with permanent or temporary disabilities, and its commitment to complying with the Ontario *Human Rights Code*. The policy affirms the university’s responsibility to provide appropriate academic accommodation

for students with disabilities to the point of undue hardship. Requests for retroactive accommodations will be considered.

This policy affirms students' rights to be treated with dignity and respect, to have their privacy and confidentiality protected, to receive appropriate academic accommodations based on documented functional limitations associated with their disabilities without being required to disclose a diagnosis.

The policy outlines students' responsibility to make the university aware of their needs, as soon as the need is apparent so that the university can develop and implement accommodations that uphold essential academic requirements and standards.

The university is committed to ensuring that students with disabilities have an equitable opportunity to fulfill the essential academic requirements and standards. Appropriate academic accommodations will not negate or undermine essential academic requirements and standards, which must be achieved by all students to successfully complete a course or program of study.

Responsibilities:

For detailed procedures for all individuals and units below, please see related procedures document.

Office of the Provost and V-P Academic

- *Ensures policy implementation.*

Office of the Vice-Provost and Dean of Student Affairs

- *Oversees the provision and resourcing of central support services for all students, including those with disabilities, through units that include Student Wellness Services (SWS) Office of University Registrar (OUR) Exams Office, etc;*
- *Chairs the university's [Advisory Committee on Academic Accommodations](#), which acts as a network of contacts for QSAS on matters relating to academic accommodations for students with disabilities, including discussions that may help to facilitate resolutions to academic accommodation questions or concerns. In this role, ensures that faculties and university departments remain informed regarding developments in the areas of human rights and accommodations.*

Queen's Student Accessibility Services (QSAS)

- *Acts as primary support for students with disabilities seeking academic accommodations;*
- *Works with students with disabilities who register with QSAS to develop academic accommodation plans based on the required documentation that is provided;*
- *Communicates and consults with academic and administrative staff, as needed, about accommodation plans, and to ensure that academic accommodations are provided;*

- *Advises, and seeks advice from, instructors, academic supervisors and other academic personnel (e.g., department heads, deans, SGS) on matters related to academic accommodations for students with disabilities;*
- *Consults with undergraduate and graduate academic units and/or Faculties/Schools on the essential academic requirements and standards of a course or program of study;*
- *Advises units on non-academic accommodations for students with disabilities (e.g. Residences etc.);*
- *Supports students with disabilities in working out any conflicts that arise related to academic accommodations;*
- *Informs the Executive Director, SWS, and other administrative officers about potential breaches of this policy or any potential risk to the university in relation to the provision or non-provision of academic accommodations for students with disabilities;*
- *Responds to requests for information regarding students' academic accommodations in relation to complaints/inquiries (Human Rights complaints, insurance claims, etc.) as appropriate.*

Adaptive Technology Centre (ATC)

- *Provides a range of services, including the provision of course and library materials in accessible formats, computers, assistive devices, and specialized software for students registered with QSAS who qualify for these services as part of their academic accommodations;*
- *Provides technology training and quiet space to enable students with disabilities to read, write, research and study more effectively.*

Human Rights Office

- *Advises all campus units on the duty to accommodate and on Human Rights-related inquiries, questions, issues, and cases;*
- *Responds to complaints related to the duty to accommodate.*
- *Advises individuals regarding rights and responsibilities with respect to human rights and accommodation.*

Office of the University Ombudsman

- *Provides independent, impartial and confidential advice that may include facilitating the informal resolution of concerns and complaints in support of University policies and procedures and in accordance with best practices in organizational conflict management.*

University Exams Office, Office of the University Registrar

- *Implements accommodations for undergraduate students, as outlined by QSAS, for centrally-scheduled mid-year and final exams;*
- *Implements mid-term exams and tests requiring a computer for undergraduate students registered with QSAS;*

- Responds to centrally-scheduled exam accommodation issues.

Educators

- Recognize the requirement to support the academic accommodations process;
- Make themselves aware of the university's [Disability Accommodations Statement](#) and include it in all course syllabi;
- Inform themselves of Queen's services for supporting students with disabilities and refer students as the need arises;
- As requested and required, actively engage in the academic accommodation planning process with students with disabilities and QSAS by defining the essential academic requirements and standards to be considered when developing an academic accommodations plan, and considering a range of possible approaches and reasonable solutions to uphold essential academic requirements and standards;
- Work collaboratively with students with disabilities, QSAS staff, SGS or Faculty/School colleagues and administration, and other university employees, to implement academic accommodations in a manner that meets essential academic requirements and standards, and protects the dignity and privacy of students;
- Understand that their role is to help implement academic accommodations outlined by QSAS, and not to obtain information from students about their specific disabilities. Students are not required to disclose private medical information to, or seek accommodation directly from, their professors, instructors, teaching assistants, etc.

Faculty/School Administration

- Communicates with incoming and current students about services for students with disabilities and refers as appropriate;
- Communicates with educators about academic accommodations policy and procedure information annually;
- Helps coordinate the implementation of Faculty/School or program-specific accommodations, as required, including arrangements for field placements/practica;
- Engages with students, QSAS, educators, graduate supervisors, SGS and others, as appropriate, to help coordinate the implementation of complex academic accommodations.

Student with Disabilities

- Notifies the university, specifically QSAS, of their need for academic accommodation due to the functional limitations associated with their permanent or temporary disability, as soon as the need is apparent. For incoming and returning students, advance notice enables the university to develop and implement accommodations in a timely manner that uphold essential academic requirements and standards;
- Registers with QSAS and provides documentation from a regulated health care professional verifying the presence of a disability and describing the associated functional limitations; or provides documentation which verifies that symptoms are being monitored by a health care professional in their belief that the

functional limitations being experienced are related to a disability, and updates QSAS regularly as information/results are available. Disclosure of a diagnosis is not required;

- Collaborates with QSAS staff, instructors or graduate supervisors, Faculty/School office staff, SGS or others, as necessary, to develop, implement and update an appropriate accommodation plan;
- Meets administrative deadlines that support the university's ability to provide accommodations;
- Notifies QSAS immediately of changes in functional limitations;
- Notifies QSAS immediately of difficulties in the implementation of an academic accommodation.

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| Contact Officer | Jennifer Dods, Executive Director, Student Wellness Services |
| Date for Next Review | November 2019 |
| Related Policies, Procedures and Guidelines | <u>Educational Equity Policy, Accessibility Framework, Accessibility Policy, Senate Policy on Student Appeals, Rights and Discipline, Harassment/Discrimination Complaint Policy and Procedure, Queen's Policy Concerning Students with Disabilities, Queen's Accommodation Statement, School of Graduate Studies' Accommodating Graduate Students with Disabilities; OHRC Policy for Preventing Discrimination based on mental health disabilities and addictions, Queen's Records Management Policy, QSAS Documentation Requirements.</u> |
| Policies Superseded by This Policy | |