

Western University Policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

POLICY STATEMENT

1. Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that students with disabilities have a reasonable opportunity to engage in academic activities at the University and to fulfill essential course and program requirements, and to ensure that all members of the University understand their rights and obligations to reach this goal.

2. Application of Policy

This Policy and the associated Procedures apply to both graduate and undergraduate students at Western and the affiliates while engaged in academic activities related to their program of study, and includes students registered in courses or programs with Western Continuing Studies.

In the case of graduate students, reference to courses and programs throughout this Policy and associated procedures shall include milestones and requirements associated with progression in graduate programs.

3. Statement of Principles

The University recognizes the inherent dignity and equality of all students and is committed to ensuring students with disabilities have the opportunity to fully participate in the academic life of the institution.

The University also recognizes that it is subject to the Ontario *Human Rights Code* and that it is required to provide reasonable academic accommodation to students with disabilities where those disabilities create limitations that interfere with the students' participation in academic activities.

Reasonable academic accommodation is a cooperative process between the University, the student and academic staff. All participants in the process must fulfil their respective obligations set out in this Policy and the associated Procedures if it is to succeed.

The University is committed to providing reasonable academic accommodations to students with disabilities, up to the point of undue hardship, to enable students to successfully meet the essential requirements of their course or program of study.

5. Review

This Policy shall be reviewed every five (5) years from the date it comes into effect

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communicate with academic staff to the extent necessary to give effect to their academic accommodations; and

notify the SAS immediately if there are any changes in their disability status, identified limitations or the continued appropriateness of the academic accommodations that have been implemented.

Academic staff members have the responsibility to:

identify the essential requirements of their courses or milestones that cannot be altered without undue hardship (i.e. compromising the fundamental nature of their courses or milestones);

cooperate with the SAS to determine reasonable academic accommodations for students with disabilities in their courses or milestones;

cooperate with Accommodated Exams, Office of the Registrar to facilitate delivery of evaluations;

assist students and SAS in arranging accommodations related to exchange or experiential learning opportunities;

maintain confidentiality with respect to any personal information of students that is shared with the staff member to facilitate the academic accommodation;

not seek any medical or other personal information directly from a student who has requested an academic accommodation; and

where students request academic accommodations outside this Policy, refer the students to the SAS so that the request may be properly considered and appropriate accommodations implemented.

The SAS has the responsibility to:

register students with disabilities who request to use its services;

gather the necessary medical information to determine whether a student has a disability, and the nature and extent of any limitations associated with the disability;

review the course or milestone requirements for those courses or milestones for which the student is seeking academic accommodation;

determine a reasonable accommodation (or range of accommodations) that meets the student's limitations while respecting the essential requirements of the course, milestone or program of study;

consult with the academic staff member responsible for the course, milestone or program of study as necessary to ensure that any recommended accommodations do not compromise the essential requirements of the course or program;

assist students and Academic Staff in arranging accommodation in relation to exchange or experiential learning opportunities;

assist students to identify any sources of funding or other supports that may help the students with their accommodation needs;

assess any changed circumstances in a student's accommodation needs to determine whether existing academic accommodations remain reasonable and appropriate;

appropriate manner of implementing the accommodation. The SAS counsellor shall consult both the student and academic staff and shall attempt to resolve the dispute. If the dispute cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the student and academic staff, the SAS counsellor shall determine how the accommodation is to be granted, and shall communicate this determination in writing to all interested parties.

5. If either the student or academic staff is not satisfied with the determination of the SAS counsellor, they may appeal the determination in accordance with the Appeal Procedures of this Policy.

essential, and how the recommended accommodation compromises such essential requirements of the course, milestone or program.

The director of SAS or designate shall review all requests for reconsideration, including all material submitted in support of the request and all material upon which the original recommendation was based. The director of SAS or designate may consult with the academic staff or the Chair of their department or designate in order to better understand and assess the essential requirements of the course or program in question.

Where a request for reconsideration is filed, the director of SAS or designate shall provide notice to the other party involved and shall give them an opportunity to participate in the reconsideration. For example, if an academic staff member requests a reconsideration, the director of SAS or designate shall notify the student with a disability of the request and shall seek their input on it.

In the case of a King's University College student, the Director of SAS shall consult with the Manager of Student Wellness at ACSD before making a decision.

The director of SAS or designate shall make a decision on the request for review expeditiously, and in the ordinary course, within five (5) days (excluding Saturdays, Sundays, statutory holidays and other University closures) of receiving the request. The decision shall be communicated in writing to the student with a disability, the academic staff member and, where appropriate, the Chair of the relevant department.

(c) Appeal to the Vice-Provost

Either of the student with a disability or the academic staff may appeal the decision of the director of SAS or designate to the Vice-Provost or designate.

Students may file an appeal with the Vice-Provost or designate if the student:

- (a) has had a request for academic accommodation denied for any reason;
- (b) believes that they have been treated unfairly during the accommodation process or the reconsideration process;
- (c) believes that the recommended accommodation does not reasonably meet their identified restrictions; or
- (d) has new information relevant to the request for academic accommodation that was not reasonably available to the SAS counsellor at the time of the original decision or to the director of SAS or designate during the reconsideration process.

Academic staff may file an appeal with the Vice-Provost or designate only on the ground that the recommended accommodation compromises the essential requirements of the course or program of study.

Appeals shall be made in writing, and shall identify the ground or grounds upon which the appeal is based and the reasons why the student or academic staff member, as the case may be, disagrees with the reconsideration decision of the director of SAS or designate on those grounds.

Academic staff who appeal the reconsideration decision of the director of SAS or designate shall identify the essential requirements of the course or program of study, why they are essential, and how the recommended accommodation compromises such essential requirements of the course or program.

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Academic staff may file an appeal with the Vice-Provost or designate only on the ground that the determination of how the accommodation is to be implemented compromises the essential requirements of the course or program of study.

Where an appeal is filed under this section, the process outlined in section 2(c) of these Procedures shall apply with necessary modifications.

The decision of the Vice-Provost or designate shall be final, and may not be appealed under any other University policy or procedure.