



Accessible Learning Policy

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PURPOSE

The Accessible Learning Policy replaces the Disability Services Policy (2010). This policy establishes guidelines to make learning accessible and to promote social inclusion for students with disabilities enrolled in or applying for academic programs at George Brown College. It is meant to clarify the mandate, role, and responsibilities of accommodations, and provide policy guidelines for all those involved in creating an accessible learning environment at the College.

George Brown College is committed to upholding a student’s right to individualized and timely accommodation which promotes dignity, independence, autonomy, equity, and inclusion for the student. The College is also committed to reducing the need for individualized accommodations and to the elimination of disability-related barriers. This will be accomplished through better understanding of disability-related functional limitations, the appropriate and effective application of academic accommodations, access to alternate formats, ongoing opportunities for employee training, the planning of accessible buildings and classrooms, and inclusive practices in placement and on campus to increase inclusion, student learning and success. This policy has been written in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Commission Directives: Ontario Human Rights Code 1982 (Duty to Accommodate), Policy on Accessible Education for Students with Disabilities (2018), Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (2014); and the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, ODA (2001), and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, AODA (2005).



SCOPE

This policy applies to all George Brown College students and applicants seeking or receiving support from Accessible Learning Services, as they participate in the classroom, in programs and services, and field placements and to all George Brown College employees involved in the student academic accommodations process.

DEFINITIONS

This section includes an explanation of terms and abbreviations used within this document.

Word/Term	Definition
Accessible Learning Services (AL Services)	Refers to the Accessible Learning Services department, which includes the previously named “Disability Services” and “Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services.”
Academic accommodations and accommodation plan	<p>Academic accommodations are educational interventions, practices, services, or supports designed to create access and reduce or eliminate disability-related functional limitations that impact learning, academic participation, and/or demonstration of knowledge and skills. AL Services refers to an individual’s accommodations as an “accommodation plan.”</p> <p>Accommodations must be reasonable to implement and cannot modify course or program outcomes, or alter program standards.</p>
Accessibility Consultant	<p>The role of the Accessibility Consultant in AL Services is to guide and support the College’s duty to accommodate students with disabilities requesting accommodation. The Accessibility Consultant works collaboratively with the student, reviewing, assessing, and interpreting their disability-related documentation; discussing with them their previous educational accommodation experiences in order to understand what may be effective in reducing disability-related barriers; and considering the context of the academic program, to determine a meaningful and necessary accommodation plan. The Consultant works collaboratively with the faculty to understand program requirements and to be a partner in educating faculty on responsibilities and options in the accommodations process.</p> <p>The Accessibility Consultant follows professional practice and adheres to all legislative privacy guidelines in the province of Ontario.</p>
Disability	<p>As defined by the Ontario Human Rights Code, Section 10(1):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>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,</i> b) <i>a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,</i> c) <i>a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,</i> d) <i>a mental disorder, or</i> e) <i>an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997</i>
Interim accommodation	Temporary accommodations provided while a student and their Accessibility Consultant determine reasonable and necessary permanent accommodations.

<u>Word/Term</u>	<u>Definition</u>
Reasonable accommodations	Actions to alleviate or remove a permanent or temporary disability-related functional limitation which do not compromise course objectives or academic standards.
Retroactive accommodations	Accommodations for permanent or temporary disabilities are considered retroactive when the request is made after-the-fact, as the result of a barrier that prevented a student from communicating their need for accommodation.
Self-identification process	Registering with Accessible Learning Services is voluntary on the part of the student, i.e. a student needs to self-identify as being in need of an accommodation due to a disability or disabilities in order to register for services and supports.
Undue hardship	The Ontario Human Right’s Code sets out three elements that may be considered in assessing whether an accommodation would cause undue hardship: cost; outside sources of funding, if any; health and safety requirements. Please see the relevant Ontario Human Rights Code definition: http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-preventing-discrimination-based-mental-health-disabilities-and-addictions/14-undue-hardship [will be included as an appendix with published policy]. http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/guidelines-accessible-education/undue-hardship-standard [will be included as an appendix with published policy]

Add the student- in this case the student refers to a person with a disability

POLICY

1.0 Background

1.1 This policy has been written in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code 1982 (Duty to Accommodate), the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

2.0 General Principles

2.1 George Brown College is committed to ensuring that students with disabilities seeking support are able to receive reasonable, timely and effective academic accommodations¹ and supports necessary for them to participate fully in the academic environment. Accessible Learning Services (AL Services) provides this support for all George Brown College students.

3.0 Accommodation – College Access

3.1 Students with disabilities must meet program eligibility criteria, timelines, and applicant selection criteria relevant to the program. They will be provided access to reasonable accommodation(s) in the admission and

¹ The Tribunal has ruled that short of undue hardship, the highest point in the continuum of accommodation must be achieved. However, if there is a choice between two accommodations which are equally responsive to the person’s needs in a dignified manner, then those responsible are entitled to select the one that is less expensive or that is less disruptive to the organization. [OHRC’s [Policy](#) and guidelines on disability and the duty to accommodate (2001)].



selection process. Once a student has met a program's existing admissions criteria no additional proofs relating to capability will be required from a student with a disability during the admissions process.

- 3.2** Assessment of students with disabilities for admissibility is based on present functional ability and cannot be influenced by expected future deterioration.
- 3.3** Students with disabilities will be provided assistance and accommodation on an individual basis through self-registration with Accessible Learning Services or by request, when accessing services.
- 3.4** Once admitted to a program, students with disabilities will be provided reasonable accommodations and services to ensure that they have an opportunity to participate fully in their program of study in order to meet program outcomes. Students with disabilities are responsible for fulfilling the essential requirements of the program with reasonable accommodations and services.

4.0 Accommodation – Access to Information

- 4.1** Information regarding the availability of services for students with disabilities will be communicated clearly in college materials including but not limited to Full-Time and Part-Time Program Guides found on the George Brown College website, the college's "Offer of Admission" package, and all course outlines.
- 4.2** A student's registration with Accessible Learning Services will not be identified on the student's official college transcript and/or graduation documentation. Only those involved in the accommodation plan shall be alerted to a student's registration with AL Services.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendix 1: Accommodation Procedures and Roles

RELATED POLICIES

Academic Appeals Policy

AODA Accessibility Policy

Employee Code of Conduct – Academic Staff

Code of Student Behaviour and Community Standards Policy

Office of the Registrar's Policies

Human Rights Discrimination and Harassment Policy

RELATED MATERIALS

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005)

Integrated Accessibility Standards (subset of Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005)

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (1990)

Ontario Human Rights Code 1982 (Duty to Accommodate)

Ontario Human Rights Code (1990)

Personal Health Information Protection Act (2004)

Workplace Safety and Insurance Act (1997)

APPENDIX ONE: PROCEDURES

Accommodation Procedures and Roles

Students requiring disability-related accommodation at George Brown College may obtain assistance from AL Services. Assistance includes guidance and support in accessing reasonable and effective academic accommodations to reduce or eliminate barriers and increase access and inclusion. AL Services is committed to providing leadership for an efficient, effective, and respectful academic accommodations process. This process is a shared responsibility involving AL Services, the student and relevant college employees.

1.0 Registering with Accessible Learning Services

It is the student's responsibility to self-identify in order to register with AL Services. Students are encouraged to register before the semester starts or as early in the semester as possible; however, AL Services recognizes that many factors impact a student's ability or interest to access accommodation services and given this, students may register at any time during the academic year. It is worth noting that some accommodations take time to set up or book, so the timing of some accommodations could be delayed depending on when a student registers.

2.0 Documentation

Documentation from a health professional describing disability-related functional impairment is normally required in order to develop an accommodation plan. As such, students registering with AL Services will be asked to provide documentation related to a permanent or temporary disability. Details about required documentation will be shared through departmental and College outreach materials, verbally, in print and on the web. The health professional providing this documentation must be licensed from a regulated body and qualified to do so. No disability-related documentation or identifier will be shared outside the AL Services office without the student's consent. (See section 8.0: Privacy and Confidentiality).

3.0 Determining the Academic Accommodation Plan

Individualized accommodation plans are created by the Accessibility Consultant and informed by the student's disability documentation, the student's previous experience of accommodation, common service procedures of the department, and any potential accessibility barriers within the academic program. The Accessibility Consultant considers potential options for addressing the student's functional impairment, reducing or eliminating barriers, and creates a feasible and appropriate accommodation plan which does not modify course or program outcomes or lower program standards.

The following key principles will guide the accommodation process:

- Dignity - accommodations will promote respect and dignity for persons with disabilities;
- Independence – accommodations will maximize autonomy, the freedom to make one's own choices;
- Integration – accommodations will promote full integration, so that students may benefit from all aspects of the educational experience and in the same or similar way as other students;
- Equity- accommodations will level the playing field by promoting fairness for the individual, given the impact of their functional impairments in the academic setting;

- Equal Opportunity – accommodations will ensure that persons with disabilities have the same access as others to obtain, use and benefit from the full educational experience.
- Safety - For course work, placements, or evaluations involving performance or demonstration of practical skills where the application of an accommodation may cause safety concerns, those accommodations may not be granted.

4.0 Implementing the Academic Accommodation Plan

The effective and efficient implementation of the accommodation plan is a shared responsibility between AL Services, the Student, the Faculty, the Chair, and the Assessment Centre:

AL Services is responsible for developing and communicating the plan to all those involved, for providing guidance for implementation upon request, for engaging in collaborative problem-solving when issues arise;

The Student is responsible for fulfilling course outcomes, for communicating needs to ALServices and Faculty as appropriate, and depending on the accommodation plan, for booking tests with the Assessment Centre and alerting faculty about test bookings;

The Faculty is responsible for implementing classroom accommodations as explained in the accommodation plan, including dropping off and picking up tests from the Assessment Centre, highlighting any potential safety concerns, and seeking support from ALServices if questions arise;

Chairs are required to provide support to professors upon request to ensure that accommodations are implemented effectively, appropriately, and in a timely manner;

The Assessment Centre provides accommodated testing for the Student, receives and returns accommodated tests for Faculty, and communicates concerns with ALServices.

5.0 Interim Accommodations

Situations may arise where a student experiences a sudden onset of a disabling condition. Students without documentation who are experiencing a functional impairment related to a potential disability may meet with an Accessibility Consultant to explore their needs. The Consultant will determine if interim accommodations are warranted based on a review of the student's situation. Interim accommodations may be available while the student seeks documentation concerning the functional impact of a potential disability.

6.0 Retroactive Accommodations

Requests for retroactive accommodations are based on an unexpected disruption in a student's physical or mental health, will be given meaningful consideration, on a case by case basis. A retroactive request may be made at any time during the semester or year.

Requests for retroactive academic accommodations will be made through AL Services, with faculty involvement, and given meaningful consideration. Academic areas will not post information stating that retroactive accommodations are not available.

Should a retroactive accommodation request occur, the Student, the Faculty, and the Accessibility Consultant shall work collaboratively to find a solution. All members are expected to act in good faith as they negotiate a reasonable



outcome that satisfies the essential learning requirements of the course, preserves academic integrity, and addresses the student's need for accommodation.

The Student is responsible for:

- Communicating their needs (to faculty or to AL Services) in a timely way;
- Providing documentation that indicates the functional impact of their disability as well as the timing and duration of the impact;
- Participate actively in the retroactive accommodation process to find a solution.

The Faculty is a subject matter expert responsible for:

- Determining if a learning outcome has been met and recognizing that a learning outcome can be met in more than one manner;
- Developing and evaluating the method of measure/evaluation/grading used to assess learning (in an alternate manner, if necessary) ; and
- Consulting with AL Services and the student in the process.

The Accessibility Consultant is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the request for retroactive accommodation is considered and meets the duty to accommodate;
- Receiving, reviewing, and interpreting relevant documentation from the Student, while ensuring confidentiality;
- Suggesting options for the Student and the Faculty to consider, not advocating for any one specific option, and ensuring that the Student has an equalized opportunity to demonstrate mastery of course outcomes;
- Working collaboratively with the Student and the Faculty to determine the most appropriate way to address a retroactive accommodation request.
- Considering safety. For course work, placements, or evaluations involving performance or demonstration of practical skills where the application of an accommodation may cause safety concerns, those academic accommodations may not be granted

7.0 Managing Accommodation Concerns

AL Services is committed to ensuring that all stakeholders in the accommodation process receive service and support in a timely, respectful, and inclusive manner, and that feedback from all stakeholders is gathered and responded to on a regular basis.

The Faculty shall share accommodation concerns with ALServices to seek a resolution.

The Chair has a responsibility to ensure that accommodations are implemented by faculty, once received and to raise any issues in a timely manner with the Manager of Accessible Learning Services for collaborative resolution.

The Manager of Accessible Learning Services is responsible for addressing issues and resolving complaints and concerns regarding a student's academic accommodation plan, the implementation of the plan, or the quality of AL



Services services delivery. AL Services shall promote student feedback systems and post complaints processes wherever possible.

The Assessment Centre Manager is responsible for addressing issues related to test accommodations and for communicating trends or concerns with the Manager of Accessible Learning Services.

Students have the right to raise objections or file formal complaints or concerns, about the implementation (or lack thereof) of a specific academic accommodation using the relevant processes and procedures outlined in the Expression of Educational Concerns and Complaints policy or by contacting one of the administrators listed above.

8.0 Privacy and Confidentiality

Accessible Learning Services staff are responsible for ensuring that student information is handled with professional discretion and in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (1990) and the Personal Health Information Act (2004). AL Services staff is trained in the collection, sharing, storage, and destruction of disability-related information in compliance with these acts.

The extent to which information will be shared, with whom, and when is explained verbally (or through ASL for Deaf students) and in writing through consent and confidentiality forms to students in the first appointment, and as required with the Consultant. Students are informed of and have choice in how accommodation plans are disseminated to faculty. The College shall not create or circulate lists which identify persons with disabilities.