



Duty to Accommodate Students with Disabilities

(Updated August 2024)

Section 4 of the Alberta Human Rights Act prohibits “[denial] to any person or class of persons any goods, services, accommodation or facilities that are customarily available to the public” (Alberta Human Rights Act, 2023, p. 4). Services include post-secondary education for those with physical and mental disabilities.

Accommodation is the process through which persons with disabilities have equal access to education. We must provide accommodation “to the point of undue hardship” to our institution.

Accommodation does not lower academic or non-academic standards, and does not relieve the student of the responsibility to develop the essential skills and competencies expected of all students.

“The point of undue hardship” cannot be defined precisely because it can vary from case to case. Factors that may amount to undue hardship include

- financial cost that hurts the viability of the institution
- inability of students to meet the requirements for entering or completing a program
- significant interference with the rights of other students
- health and safety concerns for students being accommodated, other students, or service providers.

There is no duty to provide instant or perfect accommodation.

No accommodation will be provided without medical documentation.

College responsibilities:

We will support students preparing grant applications in order to access accommodations such as assistive technology, note takers in class or alternate formats for course materials.

We will consider providing a variety of accommodations depending on documented student needs. The following are examples.

For course work:

- Course materials in alternate formats, including large print, audio, electronic text
- Instructor’s notes on the Internet (Populi)
- PowerPoint presentations or notes made available in print or on Populi
- Flexible attendance policies for students whose disability cause them to be absent more than regular policy allows
- All documentation is confidential.

For exams:

- Distraction-free test areas
- Extended time
- Exam in alternate formats
- Computers and adaptive software
- Scribes and/or readers (not provided by the College, but allowed)
- Medical accommodations (for example, stretch breaks, food breaks)

Accommodations during testing would cause undue hardship to the institution when the testing no longer reasonably assesses the student’s ability to meet essential requirements of the course or program.

In cooperation with the student, we will keep written records.



Student responsibilities:

- Obtain information from Student Success and initiate a request for accommodation.
- Provide documentation to support your request for accommodation. This can be psychoeducational assessments or letters from a medical professional who is involved in the treatment of the condition. The disability must be noted in the documentation. Submit this to the Student Success Director.
- Develop a set of options for accommodating your specific disability. This may include examples of accommodations that you or others have used in the past.
- Have research and resources available to help put the accommodation in place.
- Keep written records.
- Review and revise accommodation plans as necessary.
- Inform your instructors of your accommodations

Information for this document derived/taken from:

Duty to Accommodate Students with Disabilities in Post-Secondary Educational Institutions, Interpretive Bulletin, September 2010.
https://www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca/Documents/Bull_DutytoAccom_web.pdf

Alberta Human Rights Act: revised statutes of Alberta 2000, Chapter A-25.5, Current as of April 1, 2023.
https://albertahumanrights.ab.ca/media/1utjxb3e/alberta-human-rights-act.pdf?page=A25P5.cfm&leg_type=Acts&isbncIn=9780779744060