

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The University is committed to ensuring that all students are afforded an academic environment based on principles of equal and equitable access, respect for individual differences, and academic integrity.
- 1.2 This Policy informs and guides the academic accommodation of students with disabilities in order for them to access learning while maintaining the integrity of the University's high academic standards, ensuring fairness for all students.

2. Definitions

In this Policy:

- 2.1. **Academic accommodation** means a planned variation in the way a student with a disability receives course curriculum and materials, participates in course activities, or demonstrates mastery of course content and skills through evaluation and assessment.
- 2.2. **Applicant** means a person who has formally applied to become a student at the University.
- 2.3. **Dean** means the Dean (or his or her designate) of the disciplinary-specific Faculty or School that is offering the course/program for which the student is requesting or receiving academic accommodation.
- 2.4. **Disability** means "physical disability" and/or "mental disability" as those terms are defined from time to time in the *Alberta Human Rights Act*.
- 2.5. **Documentation regarding disability** means the requisite medical and/or psychological documents verifying a student's disability, the impact of the disability, and any resultant restrictions it places on the student. These documents must be current, relevant, thorough, and based on an appropriate assessment from a registered practitioner qualified to speak to such matters.

Approval Authority	Implementation Authority	Effective Date	Date Last Revised
General Faculties Council	Associate Vice-President (Students)	October 3, 2016	October 18, 2008 (formerly titled Students with Disabilities)

- 2.6. **Essential requirements** means the knowledge and skills that a student must acquire and demonstrate to successfully meet the learning objectives of the course or program.
- 2.7. **Instructor** means a member of the University's academic staff who is responsible for teaching and/or supervising a course.
- 2.8. **Student** means a person who is registered in full-time or part-time credit or non-credit courses/programs offered by the University, including the English for Academic Purposes program.
- 2.9. **University** means the University of Lethbridge.

3. Application and Scope

- 3.1 This Policy applies to:
 - a) the instruction and delivery of course materials in the classroom and through electronic mediums;
 - b) student participation in course activities;
 - c) an Instructor's methods of evaluation and assessment; and
 - d) a student's demonstration of mastery of course content and skills through evaluation and assessment.

4. Principles

- 4.1 The University provides academic accommodations for students with disabilities in accordance with the *Alberta Human Rights Act*.
- 4.2 The University reaffirms that all students are expected to satisfy the essential requirements of their courses and programs of studies and recognizes that students with disabilities may require academic accommodations to do so. Academic accommodation will be provided to students with disabilities to the extent that the accommodation does not cause undue hardship to the University or does not alter the academic standards of the University's courses and programs.
- 4.3 Accommodating students with disabilities is a shared responsibility and a collaborative process. To this end, the University is committed to educating students, Instructors and staff about the requirements to accommodate students with disabilities, the provisions of the *Alberta Human Rights Act*, and the resources available to provide additional information and guidance.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- 5.1 Accommodating students with disabilities is a shared responsibility and a collaborative process that involves the student requesting the accommodation, the Instructor, the Faculty/School or program providing the accommodation, and the Accommodated Learning Centre, which coordinates the request for and the provision of the accommodation. The University recognizes that such academic accommodation places certain responsibilities on all those involved, including the following:

- a) **Applicants:** Applicants applying to the University for admission:
- i) are strongly encouraged to declare a disability and their need for accommodation during the application process to the University and should seek assistance from the Accommodated Learning Centre. All documentation related to the applicant's disability will be held by the Accommodated Learning Centre. Information related to making admissions decisions will be disclosed as required on a need-to-know basis;
 - ii) are strongly encouraged to provide advance notice to the University for programs with on-site or non-academic requirements (such as auditions, interviews, portfolios) to ensure appropriate accommodation can be arranged within the admission timelines;
 - iii) upon request to the University, will be provided with admission information in alternate or accessible formats within a reasonable time;
 - iv) should not interpret admission into a program as a guarantee that an applicant will be able to meet the essential academic requirements of the program or of any specific course.
- b) **Accommodated Learning Centre:** The Accommodated Learning Centre will:
- i) coordinate, provide, implement and/or deliver support and assistance to those students with disabilities when requested, subject to the limits of undue hardship;
 - ii) receive and verify a student's documentation regarding disability, and request and obtain any additional documentation regarding disability reasonably required by the University;
 - iii) ensure all student information and documentation regarding disability is treated confidentially in accordance with this Policy, subject to disclosure as required by law;
 - iv) review all documentation regarding disability and confer with the student in order to discuss recommended and/or requested academic accommodations;
 - v) in consultation with the student, and/or the Instructor/Dean where appropriate, develop an academic accommodation plan based on the student's needs, available course/program information and essential requirements;
 - vi) whenever possible, discuss with the applicant a proposed academic accommodation plan prior to registration and, when necessary, confer with the Instructor/Dean to clarify course/program requirements as they relate to the student's disability and potential accommodation needs;
 - vii) confer with the Instructor and Dean, as needed, on academic accommodations that are congruent with the essential requirements of the course/program;
 - viii) provide assistance and information pertaining to academic accommodations to Instructors, Chairs/Directors, Deans and other staff, as needed.

- c) **Students with disabilities:** A student requiring and/or requesting academic accommodation shall:
- i) understand that he/she is responsible for:
 - following academic accommodation procedures;
 - meeting the essential requirements of a course/program;
 - discussing with the Accommodated Learning Centre, the Instructor, and the Faculty/School, any concerns he/she may have about whether his/her ability to meet the essential requirements of a course/program prior to enrolling in a course/program;
 - ii) make formal requests of, or register with, the Accommodated Learning Centre when he/she needs assistance beyond what is provided in a course in relation to:
 - receiving course materials and materials; and/or
 - participating in course activities;
 - iii) register with the Accommodated Learning Centre when he/she needs an accommodation for demonstration of mastery of course content and skills through evaluation and assessment;
 - iv) provide the Accommodated Learning Centre with all documentation, regarding a disability, that is reasonably requested by the University and keep that information up to date;
 - v) contact the Accommodated Learning Centre as soon as possible about any required academic accommodations, taking into account the complexity of implementation of the required accommodation(s);
 - vi) become familiar with and follow Accommodated Learning Centre policies and procedures with regard to registration, renewing registration, and the provision of academic accommodation and supports;
 - vii) collaborate with the Accommodated Learning Centre, Instructors and others as appropriate (for example, academic advisors, Chairs/Directors, Deans, Library staff) by identifying learning needs to develop an appropriate accommodation plan;
 - viii) understand that he/she may not appeal on the basis of disability where he/she has chosen not to use an approved academic accommodation while completing a course;
 - ix) understand that the coordination, provision, implementation and/or delivery of academic accommodations cannot begin until a disability is disclosed and the documentation regarding disability has been received and reviewed by the Accommodated Learning Centre, and is subject to the limits of undue hardship;
 - x) understand that he/she may be asked to provide documentation of any previous academic accommodation the student received from other educational institution(s).

- d) **Instructors:** To help facilitate a student's academic success and maintain the University's academic standards for the benefit of all students, Instructors shall:
- i) refer to the Accommodated Learning Centre all students who self-identify with a disability;
 - ii) refer to the Accommodated Learning Centre those students who the Instructor suspects may require disability and/or academic support services provided by the Accommodated Learning Centre.
 - iii) forward any academic accommodation requests and any documentation regarding disability, provided by the student, to the Accommodated Learning Centre;
 - iv) identify, upon request, and with the assistance of their academic Faculty/School, the essential requirements of a course and provide this information to the Accommodated Learning Centre;
 - v) collaborate with the Accommodated Learning Centre in structuring appropriate academic accommodation(s) that meets the needs of the student with a disability, and satisfies the essential requirements of the respective course or program. and implement the terms of any such academic accommodation(s);
 - vi) confer with the Accommodated Learning Centre if the proposed academic accommodation is not appropriate or effective;
 - vii) maintain the confidentiality and privacy of students with disabilities who are registered with the Accommodated Learning Centre.

6. Review of Academic Accommodation

- 6.1 In the event the student disagrees with the academic accommodation(s) developed and/or recommended by the Accommodated Learning Centre, the student may request a review of the same, in accordance with and subject to the following:
- a) the student shall promptly discuss the matter with the Instructor and the Accommodated Learning Centre;
 - b) if no satisfactory resolution is promptly reached following discussion with the Instructor and the Accommodated Learning Centre, then the student shall promptly discuss the matter with the Dean. In assessing the matter, the Dean will consider the student's requested academic accommodation(s), review all relevant documentation, and may consult with others as appropriate. If the Dean agrees with the student's requested academic accommodation(s), the Dean shall direct the Accommodated Learning Centre and the Instructor in writing that those academic accommodations be provided. If the Dean does not agree with the student's requested academic accommodation(s), the Dean shall provide her/his decision and the reasons for that decision in writing to the student, the Instructor and the Accommodated Learning Centre;
 - c) if the student is not satisfied with the Dean's decision, the student may write to the Associate Vice-President (Students) within two (2) weeks from the date of the Dean's written decision and request a further review. The Associate Vice- President (Students), in consultation with the Associate Vice-President (Academic), will review all relevant documentation and consult with others as appropriate. The Associate Vice-President (Students) will render a final written determination of the matter to the student, the Instructor and the Accommodated Learning Centre. There shall be no

- review of or appeal from the decision of the Associate Vice- President (Students);
- d) in all cases and at all stages of review, all parties are encouraged to work with one another to informally resolve any academic accommodation concerns.

7. Confidentiality

- 7.1 All documentation regarding disability will be held securely in the Accommodated Learning Centre. Information about academic accommodation may be disclosed to those University personnel who have a need-to-know such information in order to perform their duties or carry out their responsibilities under this Policy.

8. Related Policies, Procedures and Other Documents

- Privacy Policy