GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES ON ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Authorization: Senate
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The purpose of these guidelines and procedures (“Guidelines”) is to support the implementation of the Policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities (“Policy”), as approved by Senate. In the event of a discrepancy between the Policy and these Guidelines, the Policy will apply.

The provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student requesting accommodation. It is recognized that academic accommodations are intended to “level the playing field” for students with disabilities but are not intended to give students an advantage.

The following definitions shall apply in these guidelines and procedures:

“Academic Integrity” is defined as the essential academic requirements of a course of program which includes but is not limited to the knowledge and skills which are necessary to meet the learning objectives.

“Chair” means head of an academic unit and includes a Department Chair or School Director.

“CSD” means the Centre for Students with Disabilities at the University. CSD is the unit designated to assist the University community in integrating students with disabilities into all aspects of the University’s academic life.

“Course Instructor(s)” is defined as the individual(s) teaching the course, or in the case of graduate students, can include a faculty advisor or advisory committee.

“Dean” means the dean of the college who has responsibility for the course or program.

“Disabilities” shall have the same meaning as under the Ontario Human Rights Code in force and as amended from time to time, and may include but is not limited to:

- learning disabilities
- attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder
- hearing and/or vision disabilities
• medical disabilities
• physical disabilities
• acquired brain injuries
• psychological/emotional disabilities

“Examinations” include but are not limited to midterms, tests, quizzes, lab examinations or final examinations, competency examinations and defences.

1. ADMISSIONS

a) In its admission and liaison activities, the University actively encourages applications from individuals with disabilities. After receiving their application from the Ontario University Application Centre, the University will provide upon request, admissions information in alternate forms (Braille, electronic, etc.) as required. Applicants who require accommodation during the admission process are strongly encouraged to identify their disability related needs directly to the CSD.

b) Applicants who believe that as a result of their disability their admission average does not reflect their academic ability are encouraged to identify their disability by completing the appropriate form available from the CSD. Applications for admission are considered in light of the information and documentation provided with respect to the applicant's disability and the impact on his/ her academic record.

c) Applicants are advised that decisions concerning specific forms of academic accommodation are made with consideration of the learning objectives of a specific course or program. Acceptance to the University does not guarantee the granting of any specific form of academic accommodation. If an applicant believes that his or her choices concerning a specific course or program may be affected by the specific forms of academic accommodation granted by the University, the applicant should contact the CSD as early in the application to a program or course selection process as possible in order to discuss accommodation needs. Personal information provided to the CSD is protected by University policies on the release of student information and the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA), and is not shared outside the CSD without the student’s consent.

2. REGISTRATION WITH THE CSD

Students with disabilities who have been admitted to the University and who require academic accommodation either in-course or during Examinations must normally register with the CSD no later than the 40th class day.

3. DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Students requesting academic accommodation must provide appropriate documentation satisfactory to the University. The assessment must be comprehensive and reflect the
student’s learning needs in a university setting and support the requested accommodation. Specific documentation requirements are as follows:

a) Documentation for students with learning disabilities must include a current\textsuperscript{1} psycho-educational assessment report that contains a diagnosis of a learning disability. It must be completed and signed by a registered psychologist or a registered psychological associate to support these requests.

b) Documentation to support medical or psychological disabilities must be from a qualified professional(s) and include: a statement of the diagnosis and nature of the disability; information on the severity, duration and intensity of the disability; and, whether the disability is permanent or temporary.

Documentation will need to be renewed as appropriate to reflect the student’s on-going need for academic accommodation.

4. ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

Examples of academic accommodations available may include, but are not limited to:

- Advanced provision of reading lists and other course materials to allow for alternate format transcription;
- Alternate scheduling for the completion of course, project, thesis work, or Examinations, including competency examinations;
- Extensions to program completion time limits;
- Use of assistive technology in the classroom/ laboratory/ field (e.g. FM systems worn by Course Instructors);
- Use of oral and visual language interpreters and/or note takers in the classroom;
- Use of audio and or visual recording of lectures;
- Use of adaptive technology;
- Support for Examinations including extra time, a private room, use of a computer, adaptive software or word processor, or access to a reader or scribe as needed;
- Special seating; wheelchair accessible tables; and
- Adjustments to lighting or ventilation.

5. PROVISION OF ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION – GENERAL

a) A number of factors can affect the timeliness of decisions regarding accommodations including but not limited to the adequacy of documentation, the nature of the accommodation requested and the timing of the request. Students are strongly encouraged to engage in the process of requesting accommodation early. Timelines for submission of certain kinds of requests are identified in Sections 5, 6 and 7.

\textsuperscript{1} “Current” is generally defined as occurring within the last three years, or having a diagnosis at 18 years of age or older. Documentation that is more than three years old will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
b) The CSD has authority to make decisions for academic accommodation in accordance with Section 6. Other forms of academic accommodation are decided in accordance with Section 7. CSD advisors can help to identify appropriate academic accommodations, provide supportive documentation required in order to access resources, and assist in the arrangements for appropriate academic accommodations.

c) Students registered with the CSD who need to have textbooks produced in alternate format (e.g., DAISY, Braille, large print, or e-text) must make the request directly to the Library Accessibility Services at least two months prior to the start of classes. Students with disabilities should consult the course outline prior to the commencement of the class to determine the required readings.

6. PROVISION OF ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION – CSD

a) Requests for certain forms of academic consideration can be approved directly by the CSD. These include requests for:

i. note taking;
ii. arrangements for appropriate seating in a classroom;
iii. the writing of Examinations in the CSD Exam Centre to facilitate the use of extra time, a private room, use of a computer, adaptive software or word processor, or access to a reader or scribe, as needed.

b) Students who have been approved to write mid-term Examinations in the CSD Exam Centre must normally schedule their examination times with CSD at least 7 days prior to the scheduled examination date.

c) Students who have been approved to write final Examinations in the CSD Exam Centre must normally schedule their examination times with the CSD no later than the 40th class day of the semester.

d) Where Examinations are written in the CSD Exam Centre, the CSD is responsible for informing the department/ school of the names of those students who will be writing in the CSD at least three working days prior to the scheduled date of the Examination. The CSD will collect and return the Examination to the department/ school the first working day following the Examination. Unless there is agreement otherwise with the Course Instructor, all Examinations written in the CSD Exam Centre shall be administered at the same time as the scheduled course Examination.

7. PROVISION OF ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION – UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

a) Requests for academic accommodation not included in Section 6 (e.g., alternate formats for Examinations, or alternate dates for Examinations) must be reached on a case by case basis. For these types of requests, the CSD will provide the
Course Instructor with formal written notification of the need for the academic accommodation as supported by the student’s documented assessment (“Notification”). Course Instructors are encouraged to contact the CSD to discuss the request if the accommodation requested by the student is not consistent with the Notification, or if there are questions related to the impact of the accommodation on the Academic Integrity of the course.

b) Students requesting accommodations for in-course academic deadlines (i.e., extension of an assignment) must submit those requests to the Course Instructor at least 7 days prior to the in-course academic deadline.

c) If consensus on academic accommodation cannot be reached between the student and the Course Instructor, the CSD should be consulted for advice. If consensus still cannot be reached with the assistance of the CSD, the Course Instructor shall consult the Chair or designate.

d) If, after consultation with the Chair, consensus still cannot be reached on the type(s) of academic accommodation to be provided, the Chair shall provide within 5 working days a report to the Dean (or designate). The Chair’s report will include the Notification from the CSD, information on the Academic Integrity of the course or program, if applicable and the type(s) of academic accommodation proposed. Within 5 working days of the receipt of this report, the Dean (or designate) shall make the decision on the type(s) of academic accommodation to be provided and advise the parties.

8. PROVISION OF ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION – GRADUATE STUDENTS

a) Requests for academic accommodation not included in Section 6 (e.g., alternate formats for Examinations, or alternate dates for Examinations) must be reached on a case by case basis. For these types of requests, the CSD will provide the Course Instructor with formal written notification of the need for the academic accommodation as supported by the student’s documented assessment (“Notification”). Course Instructors are encouraged to contact the CSD to discuss the request if the accommodation requested by the student is not consistent with the Verification, or if there are questions related to the impact of the accommodation on the Academic Integrity of the course.

b) Students requesting accommodations for in-course academic deadlines (i.e., extension of an assignment) must normally submit those requests at least 7 days prior to the in-course academic deadline.

c) If consensus on academic accommodation cannot be reached between the student and Course Instructor, the CSD should be consulted for advice. If consensus cannot be reached, the Course Instructor shall consult the Graduate Program Coordinator.

d) If, after consultation with the Graduate Program Coordinator, consensus still cannot be reached between the Course Instructor and the student, the Graduate
Program Coordinator shall provide within 5 working days a report to both the Assistant Vice-President (Graduate Studies) and the College Dean (or designate) who has oversight responsibility for the graduate program. The Graduate Program Coordinator’s report will include the Notification from CSD, information on the learning objectives of the program or course(s), and the type(s) of academic accommodation proposed. Within 5 working days of the receipt of this report, the A.V.P. (Graduate Studies) and the Dean (or designate) shall make the decision on the type(s) of academic accommodation to be provided and advise the parties in writing.

9. APPEAL PROCESS

Decisions made under Sections 6, 7, or 8 may be appealed by the student to the Senate Committee on Student Petitions (“Petitions”) in accordance with Petitions’ Bylaws and Regulations.