Information for
Faculty and Academic Staff
on Effective Accommodations
to Remove Disability-Related Barriers
for Placements that Meet
Academic Practicum Requirements

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YORK UNIVERSITÉ UNIVERSITY

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Introduction

Over the past thirty years, there has been considerable focus and consensus on what constitutes reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities in postsecondary institutions. However, accommodations that are appropriate for a classroom setting might not be suitable to meet the essential requirements in a placement setting that requires experiential learning. For some students, the unique demands of the clinical environment reveal disability-related issues that were unanticipated with a need to consider accommodations differently than in the past. These challenges might include:

- the volume of new information,

- the variety of complex settings, and different expectations,

- adapting to different supervisors with different supervisory styles, interpreting their expectations,

- less predictability and varying degrees of structure

- absences for disability-related reasons may adversely impact on colleagues, professional clients, and patients.

- disclosure issues are more difficult to navigate.
  For example: Who to disclose to? What to disclose?
  When to disclose?

- Managing externally imposed deadlines

- Ensuring client care and confidentiality

This booklet is designed to support the collaborative work between students, faculty, academic administrators, and Student Accessibility Services to provide clarity and transparency to the accommodations processes as outlined within the Ontario Human Rights framework. Complying with the legal obligation to accommodate is the minimum expectation of universities.

Developing a diverse workforce that represents the general population requires thinking about the intersectional challenges that students bring to learning in professional environments and the different kinds of barriers that students face. These can include: disability related barriers that require accommodation; working in a different language or educational and cultural context; juggling financial and family responsibilities; facing micro aggressions and other challenges. A more inclusive learning environment can be created through the application of Universal Design principles. These include: incorporating information through multiple formats and opportunities to apply and practice skills; observing and asking questions as issues arise and providing flexibility wherever possible in scheduling. Universal design practices can reduce the number of accommodation requests because the student's needs can be met through the course design rather than through specific accommodations.

An example of the effectiveness of this approach is a pilot program that was developed to provide clinical mentors for students with disabilities requiring accommodation in professional placements. The success of students with disabilities in their placements/practicums through this mentoring process in which there were opportunities to ask questions and obtain feedback led to the expansion of this approach to include all students.

Professional programs may support diversely situated student group by:

- clearly communicating the competencies that need to be developed

- building partnerships and programming to support students in learning effectively and being resilient.

Introductory skills courses, peer mentors, study groups, academic and professional skills sessions, and simulation labs can support student learning for diverse types of material and skills development. They also provide a network of support for students who may require it. Bringing the hidden curriculum of how to learn and the cultural expectations embedded in professional practice to the forefront communicates clearly that you understand the diverse range of learning issues faced by students and that you want to collaboratively foster an effective learning environment

Creating a welcoming environment for students that acknowledge the challenges involved in learning and articulates the need for accommodation for disability-related barriers will encourage students to seek assistance for learning and to disclose early on in their program rather than avoiding or delaying disclosure for fear of being stigmatized. Communicating the process and expectations for seeking accommodation for disability-related barriers can support students in obtaining what they require in a timely manner. The following suggestions may enhance timely disclosures:

• Programs should outline on their admissions website the essential requirements and core competencies based on professional certification or licensing requirements,

• Acceptance letters should include information about Student Accessibility Services and the accommodations process for students with disabilities.

• A statement about disability and the willingness to accommodate should be included on the syllabus of each course.
For example: The School of Social Work is committed to providing accommodation to support students with documented disabilities to facilitate academic and co-curricular success. The Practicum Office will make reasonable efforts to ensure that appropriate supports are in place. Students requesting accommodations must be registered with Student Accessibility Services.

A link to Student Accessibility Services' website should be included on the Department's website.

Academic Accommodations: The Basics

Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with Student Accessibility Services and discuss their placement accommodations well in advance of its start to allow for good decision-making and communication with everyone who is involved. In a paid co-op placement, the participating partner should be consulted. Human Resources may be able to provide the required accommodation for co-ops. Academic programs may include other experiential learning opportunities that are not tied to practicum requirements. Many of the strategies in this handbook may be helpful in solving issues that may arise.

Difficulties cannot always be anticipated and creative problem solving is required when problems arise. Contacting the student's Accessibility Counsellor when problems first arise is important so that they can be addressed before the student experiences a failure. It is prudent to respectfully broach the possibility that there may be a barrier to success that can be accommodated through collaboration with Counsellors in Student Accessibility Services, even if the student has not so far disclosed the presence of a disability or expressed a concern about disability-related barriers.

Types of disabilities

Students registered with Student Accessibility Services may be registered in any of the following disability categories: D/deaf, deafened or hard of hearing, low vision or legally blind, mobility or functional limitations, mental health issues, learning disability, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, autism spectrum disorder, concussion, brain injury or other medical conditions.

Students may also be registered for temporary disabilities such as a broken limb or short-term impairment after medical treatment or surgery. Assistance can be given for transportation for practicums, placements and labs as required; and for problem-solving the completion of academic work.

Within Human Rights frameworks students with disabilities are required to specify their disability-related functional limitations, through documentation written by a licensed medical professional.

Accommodations

Academic accommodations are provided when students experience disability-related barriers to demonstrating their knowledge and skills. Accommodations are required to be designed so as to provide equitable access for students with disabilities to meet the academic standards of their program. A student may have a disability but not require accommodation if the student does not encounter barriers in relation to their functional limitations. For example, a student with a chronic health disability managed well by medication, diet and appropriate coping strategies may decide not to register for Accessibility Services. On the other hand, a student may register, but not request that accommodations be provided until they experience a change in their health that then makes accommodations necessary.

It is reasonably requested and expected that students will seek accommodations in advance of actually needing them implemented, so as to achieve efficiencies that will benefit the student as much as the University and the placement setting. However, registration with Accessibility Services occurs on a continuous basis because students may be diagnosed with a disability at any point during their education and/or may recognize unexpectedly at any time that they need to exercise their right to request accommodation to remove barriers to demonstrating their academic knowledge and skills. It is therefore important to pay prompt attention to the accommodation requests and potential accommodation needs of students throughout the academic term.

Essential requirements

The provision of accommodations must maintain the essential requirements of a program. *"An appropriate accommodation enables a student to successfully meet the essential requirements of the program, with no alteration in standards or outcomes, although the manner in which the student demonstrates mastery, knowledge and skills may be altered."*[1]

"Essential requirements" is a specific term used in human rights legislation, referring to the bona fide requirements of a task or program that cannot be altered without compromising the fundamental nature of the task or program. Determining what is an essential requirement and what is not is critical in distinguishing requirements that cannot be accommodated from what can and should be altered.

- Ontario Human Rights Commission (2003)

Determining the essential requirements of your program provides a solid foundation for understanding what accommodation requests can be met and what will require further discussion to determine whether or not required competencies are being compromised. These essential competencies are normally linked to the licensing requirements of accrediting bodies but may also be bona fide determinations of appropriate course or program requirements previously approved by the University Senate.

Communicating these essential requirements when students first apply to your program provides transparency about what is expected and opens a dialogue about what may be possible.

Students applying to your program may ask questions about flexibility within your program to accommodate their disability-related barriers. Clarity about your essential requirements provides a basis from which to open the conversation and explore what is possible and not possible, and strengthens the rationale upon which decisions are made.

Outlining the competencies that students must demonstrate articulates what students are required to know and to do. Accommodation may mean that students differ in how their knowledge and skills are demonstrated. For example: students may be required to demonstrate that they can incorporate and analyze information from multiple sources. How they demonstrate this competency may differ; some may use technology, others may use diagrams, some may write bullet points. Leaving room for different ways to demonstrate a competency wherever possible leaves space to remove disability-related barriers and foster creativity. For example: providing breaks, flexibility in hours and type of setting may support students to successfully demonstrate their knowledge and skills.

The question of fairness often comes up when providing students with alternate ways of performing academic tasks. As noted above, accommodations remove barriers to provide an opportunity for students with disabilities to complete certain tasks differently, while still meeting the essential requirements of the curriculum. Faculty members play a key role in problem solving how to balance the removal of barriers while meeting academic requirements.

1. Ontario Human Rights Commission. (2004). *Guidelines on Accessible Education* (ISBN: 0-7794-7191-1). Toronto, ON: Canada.

Students with accommodations are expected to demonstrate the same knowledge and skill development as their peers. If you believe that implementing the accommodations listed in a student's Letter of Accommodation will compromise academic standards, contact the accessibility counsellor listed at the bottom of the letter. The Accessibility Counselor can collaborate with you to develop options that can address the barriers students may encounter while not compromising academic standards. Collaboration in developing solutions maintains a learning environment that supports student achievement.

In some circumstances, the nature and degree of disability may mean that no accommodation would enable an individual to meet the essential academic requirements or behavioral expectations of a course or program. In these cases, the University is not required to accommodate and may therefore refuse to provide accommodations. However, all efforts must first be made to provide all reasonable options that are well documented before the university may declare it can't provide accommodation.

Privacy & confidentiality

A student's specific diagnosis is private medical information under Human Rights Code guidelines. Under no circumstances should you ask a student to disclose this information.

Because any category of disability contains a wide range of differences in how someone functions, knowing a student's type of disability is not particularly relevant because it is not helpful without the more detailed information provided during the intake process. This information is important so that an assessment process can also take into account difficulties due to other conditions, family and social supports, past experiences of learning, and areas of strength that can compensate for difficulties.

For example, knowing a student has a learning disability is not particularly helpful without knowing the nature of the learning disability, what supports are most likely to be effective, what strategies the student uses effectively, how the student can demonstrate their strengths, how familiar the student is with coping with their disability and what social supports the student has available to them.

Once students are admitted to your program, be wary of any impulse to make stereotypical judgements about the "suitability" of accommodation requests or of a student's potential for success in your program. Opportunity to risk success and failure is as important for students with disabilities as it is for all of us.

The accommodations process follows the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy legislation (FIPPA). This means that information can be shared on a "need to know" basis. Accessibility Services will share relevant information about the disability-related impact on learning that the student is experiencing with the Practicum Coordinator, academic administrator supporting placements, or the faculty supervisor. They in turn may share relevant information with the preceptor/placement supervisor or other supervising member of the profession.

While some students are willing to talk about their disability, others may be reluctant to do so. They may fear being stigmatized and denied opportunities or receiving unwanted curiosity or concern.

Encourage students to talk about the impact of their disability on their learning. Depending on their skill and comfort levels related to their disability, students may not yet know what to tell you about their needs. Someone who is newly diagnosed may not have the same familiarity as someone who has lived with their condition for a long time. Describe what they might encounter in a placement or practicum as they may not have a clear understanding. Ask about what they think might be helpful, what interests them and show that you are open to further suggestions particularly if their needs change or become clearer with experience. Be clear about what you can and can't provide with a rationale for your decision. Communicate your willingness to work with them and their Accessibility Counsellor to generate options. Keep notes, for future reference, if necessary, of the information they share and the solutions that you discuss as well as your reasoning for rejecting or altering a proposed accommodation.

In rare circumstances, the provision of accommodations for one student may have an unanticipated impact on the experience of other students. When there are concerns about this, the Accessibility Counsellor should be contacted for assistance in resolving these difficulties or in seeking appropriate assistance. For example: a student in a class may have a severe allergy or phobia to a service animal. Finding a solution that provides suitable accommodation and supports all student learning is important. Solutions could include moving one student to a different area in the practicum setting, adjusting hours, changing placement options, obtaining approvals for the changes.

Developing an Effective Accommodation Plan

Deciding on reasonable accommodations in practical settings is a more complex task than in a classroom. A balance must be found between ensuring that students with disabilities receive appropriate accommodation and ensuring that professional standards and responsibility based on licensing requirements are met. Demonstrated efforts to accommodate a student need to be made before further actions are considered.

Transparency with respect to required competencies assists the program, the placement setting and the student to work through the learning objectives and the assessment of competencies in each area. If, at some point, a student with appropriate accommodations fails to meet the competencies, then the program is in a position to take further action.

The student's Accessibility Counsellor can be a resource in working through the following questions to develop an effective accommodation plan:

Task Analysis (IDIA, The Role of Disability Service Professionals in Determining Essential Requirements, 2004)

1. What is the purpose of the course?

What are students expected to know and demonstrate? What is the content knowledge that is required? What skills in using the content need to be demonstrated?

2. Is the competency integral to the learning of the course?

For example: presentation skills may be more important in some settings and program outcomes than in others.

Covering telephones over lunch hours may not be essential to the placement requirements

3. Does the skill need to be performed in a prescribed manner?

For example: are there institutional notetaking systems that must be utilized to enhance communication across teams?

Are there systems for dispensing medication that must be adhered to in order to meet safety requirements?

Are there protocols for ensuring the health and safety of children and vulnerable adults?

4. **Would accommodations require a fundamental alteration to the nature of the program?**

   For example, an aide working under the clear direction of a student is different from an aide performing a task without direction.

5. **What are the outcome variables that are absolutely necessary? Why?**

   What knowledge and skills must be demonstrated to successfully meet program requirements?

6. **Safety concerns must always be considered with assurances that appropriate measures have been taken to ensure the safety and well-being and confidentiality of those being served. Consultation may be required to understand institutional requirements with respect to safety.**

7. **What methods of assessing outcome variables are absolutely necessary? Why?**

   What specific licensing requirements are being considered in the mode of assessment?

   Within the workplace is there only one way for the skill to be performed?

8. **Is there only one way for the skills/knowledge to be demonstrated?**

   Is the type of assessment being calibrated to the workload demands of placement instructors or to the demands of professional placement settings to perform skills and demonstrate knowledge in prescribed ways?

For example, is there a practicum setting that has greater flexibility for performing a skill?

Being accurate under high pressure conditions or the physical demands of intensive care may be more difficult to demonstrate then in a day surgery clinic. At the same time what constitutes sufficient demonstration of the skill to meet licensing requirements?

9. **Can adaptive equipment, software or technology such as a computer be used?**

   Are there learning aids such as charts that can support accuracy and be used on the job?

   Can information be provided in an alternate format such as typed rather than only spoken or handwritten?

   Is it possible to provide visual cues for students learning to use equipment that has to be manipulated?

10. **Would there be any significant consequences or risk of such, if this skill is performed at varying levels of competency?**

    For example, accurate calculation and measurement for dispensing medication is non-negotiable on the grounds of patient safety.

    Although policy development requires a clear recognition of the importance of strong interpersonal bonds, being able to form a strong relational bond with clients may not be as important in a policy placement than in a clinical setting.

    Adequate skills in navigating physical spaces may be sufficient to meet the requirements of most placements; but not within an emergency setting where time may be of the essence.

Deciding on Appropriate Accommodations

It is important to engage in *an interactive process* to determine the optimal and most appropriate accommodations for individual students. Based on the student's functional limitations outlined within the medical documentation, the accommodations process should involve the Accessibility Service Counsellor, faculty involved in coordinating practicums, staff in clinical/placement sites, and the student.

Creative problem solving may be required to think of suitable options for difficult situations with dialogue between the faculty member, the student and the Accessibility Counsellor. The Accessibility Counsellor may pose questions to assist in determining what is essential to demonstrate and what accommodation options might be viable.

For example: a student requests that a support animal accompany them to a sterile lab environment. The lab coordinator can't approve this request and proposes that the dog lie in its crate outside of the lab environment. The student agrees to this. The Accessibility Counsellor questions whether or not this is the right solution as it is the presence of the dog that supports the student's capacity to learn and work in the lab environment. In further conversation about the role of the dog in supporting the student, the Accessibility Counsellor and the student decide that an option might be to provide structured breaks. This proves easier to negotiate then the presence of the dog inside the lab, provided that the student is mindful of not taking breaks during key moments of timed experiments.

Experts in various aspects of disability may need to be consulted to determine what is required.

For example: when a student has a physical disability, an Occupational Therapy/Physical Therapy/Ergonomic assessment may be helpful to determine what adaptive equipment and furniture may assist the student and to identify any safety concerns regarding the student's functional limitations. This type of professional assessment can support the effective determination about the essential requirements.

Factors to consider in this process include:

- Functional limitations arising from the disability assessed by the Accessibility Counsellor

- Previous accommodations (what has been effective and not)

- Articulating the skills that need to be demonstrated by analyzing the essential requirements

- Generating possible options for the task through creative problem solving

- Student input into what works for them and what doesn't

- Anticipated barriers prior to placements beginning

For example, if a student is Deaf and is going to be working in a busy clinic or hospital environment, then specific accommodations, sign language interpreters and adaptive technology need to be arranged well in advance.

Other university resources such as the library that provides transcription services can be utilized to support students in their placements. The Accessibility Counselor can be a resource to know what may be available.

Aligning the student's need for accommodation with the placement setting may also be helpful. Particular placements may be more suitable if a student needs to be absent for medical appointments or if additional time is required to demonstrate a skill or complete notes.

In some instances, dialogue may help determine an alternate course of action from the degree of accommodation that is being requested. For example, students with specific phobias that may arise in the placement setting may require skill development in managing their phobia, before accommodations are requested that would unduly change the nature of the placement. Similarly, students with recent experiences of trauma may need to develop further skills before working with clients who have experienced a similar trauma. An open discussion with careful listening by all parties may assist in developing the best course of action.

Key Questions to ask when collaboratively determining appropriate accommodations:

1. **Will the proposed accommodations result in a failure to meet any essential requirements of the program?**

   Example:
   A student can't meet the clinical requirements for client care and interdisciplinary teamwork due to required absences. Efforts to generate options must be demonstrated and documented.

2. **Will the accommodations genuinely jeopardize the safety of others?**

   Examples:
   A student with a visual impairment or a physical disability may have difficulty ensuring client safety. Would it be viable to have an assistant in this case?
   A Pharmacy student with dyslexia may make errors with numbers when dispensing medication. However, if the student has set up an effective self-checking system and there are no demonstrated errors then, one cannot assume that there may still be unacceptable risk of harm to patients. Before concluding that there are safety concerns, creative accommodation possibilities must be considered and documented.

3. **Would the accommodations fundamentally alter the education program?**

   Examples:
   Some students benefit from a longer learning period before they acquire the required skills. While logistically this can present difficulties, the essential skill requirements can be met by the student. If the number of patients/clients seen per day is reduced and the placement is extended, the learning experience of the placement is not fundamentally altered.

1. **Before determining that accommodations can't be made without compromising academic integrity, a fair process that is well documented needs to be undergone to determine what accommodations may be possible.**

Example:
A student with autism spectrum disorder who experiences considerable anxiety may find it very difficult to cope with the uncertainties of a clinical environment, particularly one that is quite unstructured.

Accommodations for this student might include:

- choosing an appropriate setting
  e.g., chronic rather than acute care

- visiting the site as an observer prior to beginning the program

- having a designated mentor and weekly sessions to review cases

- providing feedback in writing

- referring a student for counselling and coaching support.

- supporting the student to recognize the structure in what may seem to be unstructured

Things to keep in mind when collaboratively determining appropriate accommodations:

Accommodations need to be flexible and may need to be adjusted within different settings.

Every accommodation and recommendation to the student must be *well documented*. If, after all the supports and accommodations have been put in place and, if necessary, adjusted, the student cannot meet essential requirements, further action can be taken to address that outcome.

The Accessibility Counsellor should be involved when there are requests for accommodations that involve *additional costs* (adaptive furniture; equipment; software; service provision to access information). Student Accessibility Services will facilitate the provision of necessary resources in consultation with academic departments.

The *2018 OHRC Policy on Accessible Education for Students with Disabilities* outlines the requirement that students needing additional time to complete their academic studies should not have to bear additional costs for the opportunity of that additional time.

Each program needs to develop a mechanism to track the additional costs students may accrue and work with Accessibility Services to address these issues.

Strategies and supports in Clinical Settings

Additional time and effort may be needed before the student reaches the required level of competency. Ways to support this learning include:

- Having a **designated mentor** with whom the student can meet on a regular basis to problem-solve, and to discuss concerns and complex cases. This person should not be in a position to evaluate the student.

- Providing more opportunities to observe experienced clinicians in the community. If possible, providing an opportunity for the student to work in a similar setting prior to beginning a formal practicum/placement.

- Having **protected time** to read charts, review intake material and write up case notes etc. This facilitates checking and re-checking procedures to reduce error and allows time to follow up on patient or client issues needing attention. This also allows time to organize notes in a coherent, logical manner with all relevant information included.

- If a student is struggling academically and requires remediation, having a consistent person to meet with once or twice a week helps to establish a relationship, and also provides the basis for measuring progress more effectively.

- **Having a modified case load**, at least in the initial stages of a placement, if appropriate. As the student gains confidence and competence, this case load can be gradually increased until the student is able to maintain a full case load.

- Taking time away from a practicum so that the student has time to receive treatment, work on strategies, obtain equipment and be trained on it. Ways in which this time would be made up can be negotiated.

- **Modifying the schedule**/reducing overnight hours to a 10pm end time and substituting a day-time weekend call. In some circumstances students may need a longer placement with reduced hours.

- Using **simulation labs** (sim labs) to provide learning opportunities and time for practising and honing skills.

- Starting their placement two to three days earlier as an observer to allow the student extra time to familiarize themselves with the environment, routines etc.

- **Introducing Adaptive Technology** to help compensate for information processing differences or to enhance learning. Examples include: Kurzweil (text-to-speech), Inspiration, a mind-mapping program, Live Scribe pen, Dragon Professional.

Difficulties in Placements

When there is insufficient time to implement a student's accommodation request, alternate timelines may need to be explored. It is important that accommodation requests be well known long before the start of placements. Examples of difficult requests may include obtaining and installing specialized equipment and furniture. Delaying the start of the placement may be better for the student's success than working in sub-optimal conditions that then have to be remediated.

When the student requests accommodation after the mid-point of the placement or practicum or the need becomes more apparent, there may be insufficient time for the student to complete the placement with accommodation and be successful or to organize an alternate placement. In these instances, withdrawing from the course and refunding fees may provide the best course of action. A detailed summary of the student's strengths, areas needing improvement and suggested strategies will be helpful in finding a suitable alternate placement. Documenting the conversation with the student and the recommendations made will be important.
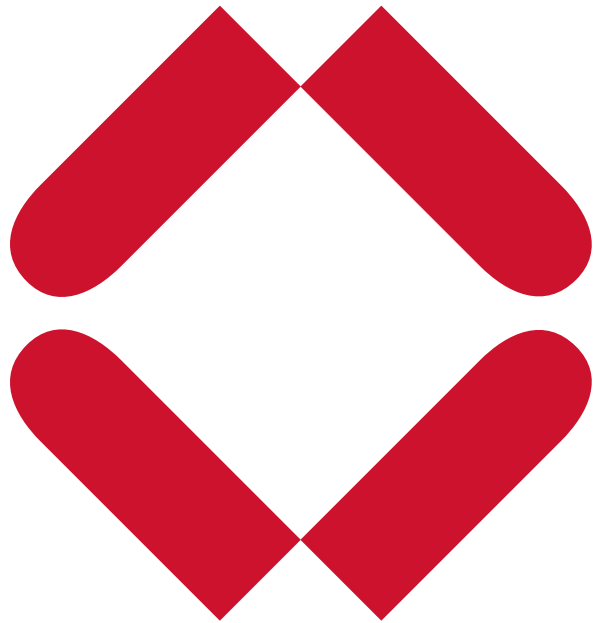
Roles in the Accommodation Process

Clinical/Placement Faculty Members

- Students often first disclose a disability to a faculty member.

- Respond appropriately to the student's disclosure. Indicate a willingness to listen while maintaining the boundaries in your role as an educator who will be evaluating the student's performance.   Only ask for information that will help you make a good referral. Remember that you are not in the role here of a medical or another professional practitioner treating a student.

- Refer students to Accessibility Services and follow up with a written recommendation to this effect.

- Because licensing exams require a documented history of receiving accommodations before a candidate for licensing can receive them from the professional body, informally accommodating a student is problematic.

- Play a role in discussing effective accommodation when requested and in implementing accommodations. Discuss the most appropriate practicum setting based on what might be anticipated with a particular disability (e.g., a placement in chronic care vs acute care).

- Only provide accommodations specifically recommended by the student's Accessibility Counsellor, although their recommendation may evolve through discussion with you and the student

- Accommodate students with specific placement needs prior to any lottery systems being implemented, to create an equitable playing field.

- Be proactive in supporting the placement/clinical setting in implementing accommodations.

- Consult the student's Accessibility Counsellor early on when difficulties develop rather than waiting until the student is failing. Not all challenges can be anticipated prior to the start of a placement. If the student has not yet disclosed the existence of a disability, broach the possibility respectfully as soon as possible with the student.

- Respect the student's privacy by keeping confidential all information about the student's needs including the fact of their being registered with Accessibility Services, unless there is a need for another person to know for accommodation purposes.

- Ensure that coordinators implement accommodations appropriately, and maintain confidentiality but also understand that they should consult with you if problems arise.

- Document the decision process for accommodations within your department so there is evidence that all efforts have been made to support the student. (Accessibility Services and faculty should do this after consulting with each other and coming to a resolution.)

- In determining whether a particular accommodation would compromise the academic integrity of a course or a professional standard or endanger safety, it would be helpful to do a task analysis and ask some key questions similar to those outlined above.

Role of Accessibility Services

- Verify the presence of a disability requiring accommodation on behalf of the University.

- Provide relevant information on the functional limitations of the disability on a need-to-know basis.

- Understand the functional limitations of the student's disability as well as the overall requirements of the professional program and the essential competencies of the program, and the demands, tasks, types of settings in which the competencies are to be demonstrated..

- Engage in the interactive process to determine appropriate accommodations.

- Facilitate accommodations for students.

- Establish contact with the Clinical Coordinators in individual programs if appropriate.

- Support faculty and staff to assess and meet their legal obligations.

- Act in the best interests of the student while also respecting the legal responsibilities of the University.

- Ensure due process has been followed by all parties to explore and provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations.

Student's Role in Accommodation

- Initiate communication and register with Accessibility Services.

- Provide requisite medical documentation about functional limitations from a medical practitioner able to speak to the disability, relevant treatments and recommendations (see Student Accessibility Services website).

- Inform the Accessibility Counsellor of upcoming practicum requirements ahead of time, before your placement has been assigned if possible

- Participate in the accommodations process. For example, identify accommodations that might assist in a particular setting, stay in contact with Accessibility Counsellor and alert them when problems arise, follow through on recommendations.

Information for Faculty and Academic Departments on Determining and Implementing Accommodations for Objective Structured Clinical Exams (OSCES)

Determining Accommodations for an Objective Structured Clinical Exam (OSCE) is a collaborative partnership between the student, the Accessibility Counsellor, the faculty member and academic staff members. This needs to take place well ahead of time as OSCE arrangements are frequently complex and time consuming.

Process

Students should be encouraged to register with Accessibility Services by including information in Admissions material, acceptance letters, student handbooks, and orientation sessions.

If a student has not registered with Accessibility Services and is requesting accommodations, the student should go to Accessibility Services website to start the registration process. (accessibility.students.yorku.ca)

The student meets with their Accessibility Counsellor to talk about accommodations for an OSCE.

The Accessibility Counsellor will use the medical documentation outlining the student's functional limitations and their meeting with the student to determine, what, if any, accommodations are reasonable to provide for each section of the exam.

The Accessibility Counsellor will contact the faculty member to understand each component before finalizing accommodations (as needed).

Examples of accommodations include:

Extra time/reading software to read door notes.

Students with motor problems may require an assistant or specialized equipment to perform a patient exam e.g., automatic blood pressure machine.

Breaks, extra time or speech-to-text software to enable some students to write up reports in a timely manner.

Students with accommodations go first or last in the OSCE so ensure a steady rotation for other students.

Test and Exam Services do not administer the practical component of OSCEs, only the written component.

Registering with Accessibility Services

- Registration packages are available on the Accessibility Services web site: accessibility.students.yorku.ca

- Students complete the package and submit relevant documentation.

- Students meet with an Accessibility Counsellor for an intake interview. This counsellor will then work with the student moving forward.

Library Supports

With a referral from Accessibility Services, **the Libraries are able to provide Transcription Services**, Adaptive Equipment Lab, Adaptive Lab Room Booking, Building Accessibility and Captioned Media. The Adaptive Lab in Scott Library offers quiet, silent or private study spaces, accessible furniture, washrooms, scanners, computers, software, and printing. The Adaptive Lab is open during all Scott Library Hours to students who are registered with Student Accessibility Services. No group study work is permitted. The Lab is intended for quiet study only. The Lab offers individual study rooms, one large room with eleven computers and one room without computers for laptop use or silent study.   Individual study rooms may be booked online through the Adaptive Lab Room Booking system.

Talking with Students about Disability-Related Barriers or Distress

- Speak privately with the student.

- Be straightforward and factual in your approach.

- Outline what you've observed and describe the services available.

- Allow time for the student to think about what you've said.

- Recognize that the student may not know that accommodation for functional limitations within the Canadian context is legally mandated.

- If you think a student may not understand what you're saying, summarize your points in written form.

- Allow time and space for the students to ask questions and to clarify what it is they need to know.

- Follow up with the student in a timely manner to check in and provide additional information and support (if required)

Library Supports Links:
Captioned Media: https://www.library.yorku.ca/web/ask-services/captioned-media/
Adaptive Lab Room Booking System: https://www.library.yorku.ca/web/ask-services/accessibility-services/adaptive-lab-room-booking/

Responding to distressed students

Instructors play an important role in recognizing a student in distress and supporting student wellness. Refer to the "Responding to Distressed Students" webpage for Faculty & Staff at www.counselling.students.yorku.ca/faculty-staff-support-scd. York's Mental Health Strategy (mhw.info.yorku.ca) is another important resource in our efforts to provide students with the support and services needed to optimize their mental health and well-being.
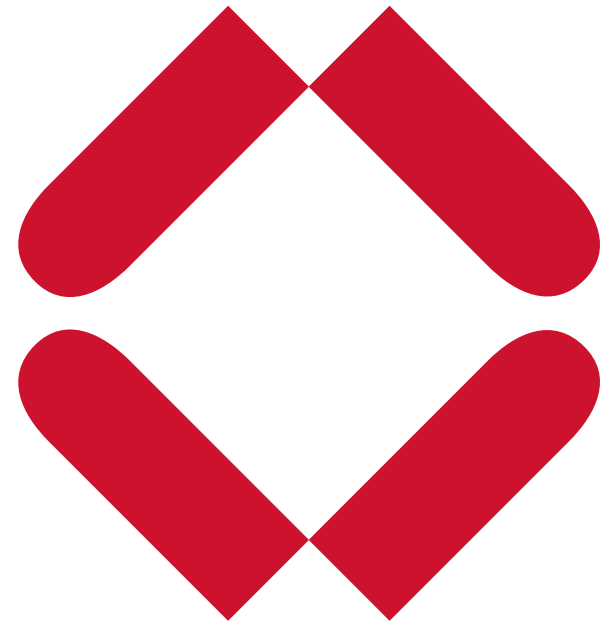
Emergency
In case of emergency, please dial 911.

For 24/7 emergency on campus, please call University Campus Police:

Urgent Matters: 416-736-5333

Non-Urgent Matters: 416-650-8000

Appendix 1 – Legal Framework

What is a disability?

The Ontario *Human Rights Code*, R.S.O. 1990, c.H.19 defines disability as:

- Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation, or disfigurement (including chronic health conditions, sensory impairments, functional or mobility disabilities)

- A condition of mental impairment or developmental disability

- A learning disability or dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language

- A mental disorder

The term *disability* covers a broad range and degree of conditions. The *Code* is not exhaustive and does not speak to the complex and intersectional lives that people with disabilities lead or to the strengths that students registered with our service demonstrate every day.

Duty to accommodate

The Ontario *Human Rights Code* guarantees the right to equal treatment in education without discrimination on the ground of disability. York University has a duty and is committed to considering accommodations when:

- Accommodations are requested by a student

- We become aware of a student's accommodation needs in a reasonable time

- Accommodations do not cause undue hardship to the University (e.g., safety to self and others, cost, and academic integrity of programs of study)

We will arrange appropriate, effective, and respectful accommodations to remove barriers so that all students meet the same academic standards. Requests for accommodation are considered in good faith.

References

AAMC Webinar Series. Disability Law 101 – *What Faculty Need to Know About Student Accommodations.* hsmcoalition.org

AAMC/UCSF Report, *Accessibility, Inclusion, and Action in Medical Education: Lived Experiences of Learners and Physicians with Disabilities.* March 2018

Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities (Policy): https://secretariat-policies.info.yorku.ca/policies/academic-accommodation-for-students-with-disabilities-policy/

Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities Policies and Procedures: https://secretariat-policies.info.yorku.ca/policies/academic-accommodation-for-students-with-disabilities-guidelines-procedures-and-definitions/

Accessible Education for Students with Disabilities, OHRC, March, 2018

Meeks, L. Neil Boylan, L. (2020) Disability as Diversity A Guidebook for Inclusion in Medicine, Nursing, and the Health Professions. Switzerland: Springer.

Meeks, L.M.& Jain, N.R. *The Guide to Assisting Students with Disabilities. Equal Access in Health Science and Professional Education.* New York: Springer Publishing Company, 2016.

Mishoe, D., & Montgomery, T. *Guidelines for Faculty who Work with Students with Disabilities* (Duke University and UCSF) https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/

Policy and Guidelines on Disability and the Duty to Accommodate OHRC, (2001, revised 2009)

Policy on Preventing Discrimination based on Mental Health Disabilities and Addictions, OHRC (2014)

The Opportunity to Succeed: Achieving Barrier-Free Education for Students with Disabilities OHRC (2003)

Resources

Association of Medical Professionals with Hearing Loss – www.amphl.org

Canadian Association of Physicians with Disabilities – www.capd.ca

Coalition for Disability Access in Health Science and Medical Education – HSMcoalition.org

Council on Access, Prevention and Interprofessional Relations (American Dental Association) – altdentalcareers@ada.org

Exceptional Nurse – www.exceptionalnurse.com

National Organization of Nurses with Disabilities – www.nond.org

Society of Healthcare Professionals with Disabilities – www.disabilitysociety.org

Society of Pharmacists with Disabilities – www.pharmacistswithdisabilities.org

Society of Physicians with Disabilities – www.physicianswithdisabilities.org

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