

**Senate Policy Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities  
Draft Revisions Prepared by the Sub-Committee on Equity of Senate Executive  
April 2017**

Current	Draft Revisions
<p><b>Policy Statement</b></p> <p>York University shall make reasonable and appropriate accommodations and adaptations in order to promote the ability of students with disabilities to fulfill the academic requirements of their programs.</p> <p>The nature and extent of accommodations shall be consistent with and supportive of the integrity of the curriculum and of the academic standards of programs or courses.</p> <p>Provided that students have given sufficient notice about their accommodation needs, instructors shall take reasonable steps to accommodate these needs in a manner consistent with the guidelines established hereunder.</p> <p>'Disabilities' shall be defined as those conditions so designated under the Ontario Human Rights Code in force from time to time, and will in any event include physical, medical, learning, and psychiatric disabilities.</p>	<p><b>Policy<sup>1</sup></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pursuant to its commitment to sustaining an inclusive, equitable community in which all members are treated with respect and dignity, and consistent with applicable accessibility legislation, York University shall make reasonable and appropriate accommodations in order to promote the ability of students with disabilities to fulfill the academic requirements of their programs. This policy aims to eliminate systemic barriers to participation in academic activities by students with disabilities.</li> <li>2. Accommodations shall be consistent with, support and preserve the academic integrity of the curriculum and the academic standards of courses and programs. All students are expected to satisfy the essential requirements of courses.</li> <li>3. Requests for accommodations shall be dealt with expeditiously.</li> <li>4. Accommodations shall be sufficiently flexible to address individual needs.</li> <li>5. Requests for extension or for deferral based on unforeseen and transient personal circumstances such as bereavement or short-term illness should be considered on compassionate grounds, but are not generally matters of academic accommodation under this policy.</li> </ol>

<sup>1</sup> This policy has been updated to at a time when Universal Design for Learning has taken on greater significance in postsecondary education and public policy. It is intended to reflect and reinforce the growing relevance and application of this approach to teaching and learning.

## Guidelines

1. Identification of students requiring academic accommodations
  - 1.1 Students with disabilities who require accommodations shall, in a timely manner, provide the relevant medical, psychoeducational or psychiatric documentation to the appropriate York University office for students with disabilities to qualify for accommodations.
  - 1.2 The University's offices for students with disabilities will assist students in the identification of particular aspects of courses that might present barriers to them and will work with them to identify the appropriate accommodations, provide supportive documentation, and assist the students and instructors in providing/obtaining accommodations.
2. Instruction-Related Accommodations
  - 2.1 Types of accommodations may include, but are not limited to:
    - Timely provision of reading lists and other course materials to allow for alternate format transcription
    - Alternate format transcription
    - Alternate scheduling for the completion of course, project, thesis work or competency examinations
    - Extensions to program completion time

6. All members of the University community bear responsibility for implementing this policy, and should make themselves familiar with the policy and the resources available to them. Accommodations are collaborative in nature and shall be based on mutual understanding.
7. Disabilities' shall be defined as those conditions so designated under the *Ontario Human Rights Code* in force from time to time.

## Guidelines

### 1. Accessibility, Accommodation and Course Design

- a) Course curriculum, delivery and evaluation methods should be designed inclusively from the outset.
- b) Even when the principles of inclusivity (or Universal Design for Learning – UDL) have been applied, accommodations may be required and requested.

### 2. Privacy and Confidentiality

- a) All documents and communications concerning accommodations shall be kept confidential and may not be disclosed without consent except to the extent that disclosure is necessary for the implementation of accommodations or the resolution of a disagreement.
- b) Students are not required to disclose a mental health diagnosis when requesting accommodation. Medical documentation must confirm a diagnosed mental health disability without a specific diagnostic label.

### 3. Roles and Responsibilities

- a) Students shall provide timely notice of requests for accommodation and the

limits

- Use of assistive devices or auxiliary aids in the classroom/laboratory/field (e.g., FM systems worn by course instructors; computerized notetakers in the classroom)
- Use of oral and visual language interpreters and/or notetakers in the classroom Permission for audio recording of lectures
- Permission for video-taping of lectures
- Special seating, wheelchair accessible tables
- Adjustments to lighting

### 3. Accommodation in Examinations and Evaluations

3.1 Test/exam accommodations may include, but are not limited to:

- alternate scheduling of examinations and essays
- alternate forms of assessment
- extended time to complete tests/examinations
- use of special equipment (computer, assistive technology, etc.)
- use of special facilities (alternate test/exam room and proctor) and/or examinations in alternate formats (e.g. audio tape, Braille, etc.)

3.2 Whenever possible, the usual procedures for writing tests and examinations shall be followed.

### 4. Accommodations Agreements

4.1 Students and instructors shall wherever possible agree to the appropriate accommodations.

4.2 In cases where the instructor and the student cannot agree about the provision of accommodations, the instructor shall discuss the recommended accommodations with an advisor from the office for persons with disabilities. If they are unable to reach an agreement, the

documentation necessary to develop an accommodation plan. For needs associated with accommodating disabilities, requests are normally expected to be made with the assistance of Disability Services, located within Counselling and Disability Services at the Keele Campus) and in the Accessibility, Well-Being and Counselling Centre at the Glendon Campus) The information provided must be sufficient for the specialized staff in Disability Services / Accessibility to determine the appropriate accommodations in consultation with the student and the instructor. Students are expected to provide timely notice of any change in their circumstances and to fulfill the role assigned to them in their accommodation plans in a timely way where required by such plans.

- b) Instructors shall take reasonable steps to accommodate in a manner consistent with these Guidelines.
- c) Programs / departments and if necessary the Deans / Principal shall make best efforts to arrange timely mediation in cases when disagreements between students and instructors about requests for accommodation are unresolved.

Counselling and Disability Services (Keele Campus) and The Accessibility, Well-Being and Counselling Centre (Glendon Campus) are the primary offices for processing requests, working with students and faculty members to develop accommodation plans, and providing appropriate resources for the community.

### 4. Instruction- Related Accommodations

- a) Instruction-related accommodations may include, but are not limited to:
  - timely provision of reading lists and other course materials to allow for alternate

Chair of the Department and/or Associate Dean or Dean of the Faculty shall be consulted.

4.3 In cases where the disagreement remains unresolved, a meditative process will be implemented by the Dean of the student's Faculty.

- format transcription / conversion
- alternate format transcription / conversion
- alternate scheduling for the completion of course, project, thesis work or competency examinations
- reasonable, proportionate extensions to program completion time limits
- use of assistive devices or auxiliary aids in the classroom/laboratory/field (e.g., FM systems worn by course instructors; computerized notetakers in the classroom)
- use of oral and visual language interpreters and/or notetakers in the classroom
- permission to audio record instruction for accommodation purposes only  
Permission for video-recording of lectures for accommodation purposes only
- special seating, wheelchair accessible tables
- adjustments to lighting

b) Accommodation in Examinations and Evaluations

a. Test and examination accommodations may include, but are not limited to:

- alternate scheduling of examinations and essays
  - alternate forms of assessment
  - extended time to complete tests/examinations
  - use of special equipment (computer, assistive technology, etc.)
  - use of special facilities (alternate test/exam room and proctor) and/or examinations in alternate formats (e.g. audio tape, Braille, etc.)
- b. Whenever possible, the usual procedures for writing tests and examinations shall be followed.

**Procedures**

## 1. Requesting Accommodations

- a. Students with disabilities who require accommodations shall, in a timely manner, provide all necessary documentation to the appropriate University office or centre, It is that office or centre that determines what is necessary documentation.
- b. Designated offices will help students to identify particular aspects of courses that might present barriers to them and will work with them to identify the appropriate accommodations, to obtain or provide supportive documentation, and to assist the students and instructors in developing accommodation plans.

## 2. Accommodations Agreements and Dispute Resolution

- a. Students and instructors shall wherever possible come to agreement about the appropriate accommodations.
- b. In cases where the instructor and the student cannot agree about the provision of accommodations, the instructor shall discuss the recommended accommodations with the specialized staff in the relevant designated office or centre, In the event of a disagreement over an accommodation plan or its implementation, normal dispute resolution processes shall be followed (beginning with the relevant program or department and, if necessary, the Associate Dean / Associate Principal of the relevant Faculty).

### **Definitions**

*Reasonable Academic Accommodations:* These are planned and agreed-upon variations in the manner in which students may receive course instruction, participate in course activities, or be evaluated. Accommodations are designed to eliminate or reduce barriers to participation in academic life. The University has a duty to provide accommodations up to the point of undue hardship, which may be related to the following factors identified in the *Ontario Human Rights*

*Code:*

- Cost
- Availability of outside sources of funding
- Health and safety requirements

*Academic Integrity:* Academic integrity refers to the upholding of essential requirements of courses and programs: All courses and programs have core or essential requirements against which students are evaluated as to whether they are demonstrating the skills, knowledge or attributes at the designated level of the course. Learning outcomes involve learning tasks and objectives that must be undertaken successfully without compromising the standard required for success in a course or program.

*Disability:* For the purpose of this policy, disabilities are defined by the Ontario Human Rights Code as follows:

- a. 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,
- b. a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- c. a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- d. a mental disorder, or
- e. an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

*Students:* For the purposes of this Policy, “students” are those individuals who have been

admitted to the University, including the School of Continuing Studies, and are eligible to enroll in courses.

*Universal Design for Learning – UDL:* The principles of UDL (sometimes referred to as Universal Instruction Design or Inclusive Curriculum Design) emphasize:

- multiple means of representation, to give learners various ways of acquiring information and knowledge
- multiple means of expression, to provide learners alternatives for demonstrating what they know
- multiple means of engagement, to tap into learners' interests, offer appropriate challenges, and increase motivation

For information and assistance, please refer to the Teaching Commons' resources at

<http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/resources-2/accommodations-and-inclusive-teaching/>