



2.3 Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY

Waterloo | Brantford | Kitchener | Toronto

Approving Authority:	Senate
Original Approval Date:	October 19, 2004 (Graduate Students) May 11, 2005 (Undergraduate Students)
Date of Most Recent Review/Revision:	May 26, 2016
Office of Accountability:	Provost and Vice-President Academic
Administrative Responsibility:	Accessible Learning Centre

PURPOSE

- 1.00 The most appropriate accommodation is one that most respects the dignity of the individual with a disability; meets the complexity of individual needs; best promotes integration and full participation; and ensures confidentiality. The purpose of this policy is to:
- create an accommodation process that fosters a climate of understanding, dignity, worth, and confidentiality;
 - ensure students with disabilities are accommodated according to the guidelines outlined by the Ontario Human Rights Commission and the intention of the Human Rights Code; and the Accessibility of Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).
 - preserve the essential requirements of the course or program. Accommodations are designed to assist the student in fulfilling the essential course requirements. Where no reasonable accommodation can be provided, the university may refuse accommodation on the grounds the essential requirements of the course cannot be met.
 - clarify roles and responsibilities in the accommodation planning process.

DEFINITIONS

- 2.00 Academic standards: benchmarks of quality and excellence in education such as the rigor of curriculum and the difficulty of examinations.
- 3.00 Accommodation: a means of preventing and removing barriers that impede students with disabilities from participating fully in the educational environment in a way that is responsive to their own unique circumstances. The principles of accommodation are three fold: dignity, individualization and inclusion (Guidelines on Accessible Education, HRC, 2004).
- 4.00 Coordinator: the coordinator of the program refers to the undergraduate coordinator (or equivalent) for undergraduate students and graduate coordinator (or equivalent) for graduate students.
- 5.00 Dean: where the Dean of the student's faculty is referenced, it is intended to mean the Dean of the student's home faculty. The Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies will also be involved and/or consulted in cases involving graduate students.
- 6.00 Disability: for the purposes of this policy, "disability" is as defined in the Human Rights Code, and refers to both long-term and interim disability.
- 7.00 Documentation requirements: students seeking academic accommodations are required to provide written confirmation from a licensed medical/psychological professional. The documentation should clearly indicate the presence of a disability and the functional impact on the academic environment. Interim support will be offered to students who suspect they may have a disability pending the receipt of documentation. Consistent with the Ontario Human Rights Commission's "Policy on preventing discrimination based on mental health disabilities and addictions", students are not required, to disclose their mental health disability diagnosis in order to register with Accessible Learning to receive academic accommodations.
- 8.00 Duty to accommodate: as determined by interpretation of the Human Rights Code, Wilfrid Laurier University will provide reasonable accommodation to the point of undue hardship.



2.3 Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY

Waterloo | Brantford | Kitchener | Toronto

-
- 9.00 Essential requirements: include the knowledge or skills which must be acquired or demonstrated in order for a student to successfully meet the learning outcomes of the course/program, or milestone requirements such as comprehensives and thesis requirements.
- 10.00 Placement Supervisor: refers to all positions that address student off-campus practicums or placements (including Community Service Learning), such as coordinator of the program, placement coordinator/supervisor, academic advisor, and/or the appropriate faculty member.
- 11.00 Reasonable accommodation: the University will provide reasonable accommodation to the point where accommodation creates undue hardship, impacts the health and safety of the student or other students or when essential requirements of the course or program cannot be met. The Ontario Human Rights Code prescribes three factors for consideration when determining if a request for an accommodation constitutes undue hardship. These are:
- a) Cost;
 - b) Availability of outside resources or funding; and,
 - c) Health and safety requirements.

JURISDICTION/SCOPE

- 12.00 Faculty, students, Accessible Learning and administrative staff have a shared responsibility in the accommodation process. The legal obligation to accommodate will require members of the university community to exercise creativity and flexibility in responding to the needs of students with disabilities while maintaining academic standards.
- 13.00 It is the responsibility of every member of the Laurier community to be knowledgeable on institutional policies related to prohibited grounds in order to prevent discrimination and ensure accessibility.
- 14.00 Whenever academic accommodations are considered relating to non-academic conduct issues, behavior contracts, etc., the ALC will be consulted to determine the need for any academic accommodations.

POLICY

- 15.00 Wilfrid Laurier University is committed to the integration of students with disabilities within the university community enrolled in undergraduate, graduate, and non-credit programs. While all students must satisfy the essential requirements for courses or programs, the administration, faculty, and staff at Wilfrid Laurier are expected to provide reasonable accommodation to students with disabilities.
- 16.00 Laurier encourages applications from students with disabilities. In accordance with general admission procedures, Laurier will accept academically qualified candidates for admission to undergraduate, graduate, and non-credit programs by examining each applicant's academic record and the impact of any extenuating circumstances.
- 17.00 Wilfrid Laurier University shall make reasonable and appropriate accommodations in an effort to promote and demonstrate the ability of students with disabilities to fulfill the essential requirements of their programs. The scope and extent of accommodations will be offered in a manner that is consistent with the relevant policies and procedures and will support and uphold the academic standards of respective programs and courses.
- 18.00 The provision of academic accommodations is based on a collaborative process that includes many academic and administrative individuals and groups within the University. Effective and open communication among all parties involved in the accommodation process is the key to optimizing the likelihood of success.



2.3 Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY

Waterloo | Brantford | Kitchener | Toronto

Responsibility of Faculty

- 19.00 Faculty members play a vital role in shaping a student's university experience. An important relationship for many students while at university is the one established between themselves and their instructors, and one which can be the key to success for many students. Although this relationship is very important to all students, it perhaps takes on more importance to students with disabilities, whose academic success will rely on good communication with their instructors. It is strongly encouraged that all requests to instructors for accommodation must first be discussed with the Accessible Learning Centre.

Responsibility of Students

- 20.00 Students are expected to fully participate in the accommodation process. Students requesting accommodation shall register with the Accessible Learning Centre once they have accepted their offer of admission from the university. Current students who suspect they have a disability that is impacting their academic performance are encouraged to make contact with the Accessible Learning Centre. Returning students (who have already registered with the ALC) are expected to express register, online, at the start of each academic year.

Responsibility of Academic Administrators

- 21.00 Department Chairs and Program Directors shall act as policy educators and shall ensure that instructors receive departmental resources and required support in order to implement any approved accommodation.
- 22.00 The Dean(s) or Associate Dean(s) of undergraduate programs shall ensure an awareness and understanding of this policy and any associated impact on respective departmental processes with Department Chairs, and Faculty.
- 23.00 The Dean of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies shall ensure an awareness and understanding of this policy and any associated impact on respective departmental processes with Department Chairs, Graduate Coordinators and Faculty.

Responsibility of the Accessible Learning Centre

- 24.00 The Accessible Learning Centre will receive all referrals for accommodation support, vet and maintain all documentation in a confidential and secure manner, create the appropriate accommodation plan with the student and will communicate the accommodation plan in writing by confidential email to the instructor(s)/Departments as appropriate. The accommodation plan will be reviewed and evaluated on a regular basis with revisions/changes shared as required.

Appeal Process

- 25.00 It is anticipated that any dispute related to the provision of academic accommodation will be resolved through discussion involving the student, the faculty member and the Accessible Learning Centre. If there is no agreement on the provision of the accommodation, appeals may be heard by the Chair of the Department, the Associate Dean or the Dean of the Faculties. The Senate Student Appeals Committee remains the last level of appeal for students at Laurier as set out in the appeal procedures.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

[The Ontario Human Rights Code](#)

[The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005](#)

[Ontario Human Rights Commission Policy on Preventing Discrimination Based on Mental Health and Addictions](#)

[Ontario Human Rights Commission Guidelines on Accessible Education](#)

RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES, & DOCUMENTS

Procedures for Undergraduate and Graduate Student Accommodations

[Undergraduate Admissions, Special Circumstance Procedures](#)

[Policy 12.3 Non-Academic Code of Conduct](#)



2.3 Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY

Waterloo | Brantford | Kitchener | Toronto

[Accessible Learning Centre Student Guide](#)

[Procedures for Considering Student Appeals](#) (Senate Student Appeals Committee)

[Accessible Learning Centre Self-Identification Form](#)

[Policy 12.2 Student Code of Conduct and Discipline](#)

[Policy 10.1 Information Availability & Privacy Protection](#)



2.3 Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY

Waterloo | Brantford | Kitchener | Toronto

Procedures for Undergraduate and Graduate Student Accommodations

Accommodation Planning

- 1.00 Students who require academic accommodations are responsible for self-identifying their needs to the Accessible Learning Centre (ALC). Supporting documentation is required to support this process. New students are encouraged to make contact with the ALC once they accept their offer of admission. Returning students are expected to register with the ALC at the beginning of each academic year.
- 2.00 Academic accommodations are assessed and provided on an individual basis. Accommodation planning is a collaborative process that gives full consideration to the overall learning objectives and requirements of the students' respective program. The following will apply for both undergraduate and graduate students:
 - 2.01 Once the student has met eligibility requirements for ALC service, a meeting will be arranged with an ALC Disability Consultant. Students will be informed that in order for a requested accommodation to be implemented, it may be necessary to share relevant information on a need to know basis with appropriate individuals within the university. Students will be asked to provide expressed, written consent when medical or psychological records or information may be shared. Information is shared in accordance with student consent, university policy and privacy access legislation.
 - 2.02 The disability consultant will, in consultation with the student, develop an accommodation plan based on the student's needs and the documentation provided, with consideration for the essential requirements of the course/program. If an accommodation is perceived to compromise any essential element of a course or program the faculty member of the respective course will be consulted. The Graduate Coordinator and the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies will be consulted for matters relating to graduate programs. The accommodation plan will be reviewed and updated as needed while the student attends Wilfrid Laurier University.
 - 2.03 The Accessible Learning Centre will maintain all documentation in a confidential and secure manner.
 - 2.04 Once the undergraduate accommodation plan has been created, the Accessible Learning Centre will communicate the accommodations in writing by confidential email to the instructor(s). The email will be delivered to faculty approximately the third week in to term and throughout the year as students register with the ALC.
 - 2.05 It is the responsibility of student to contact their disability consultant regularly, to ensure notification of any changes to their needs or program requirements which may necessitate a revision to their accommodation plan. Subsequent revisions to the accommodation plan will be discussed among the student, the ALC, and the program faculty member(s). Any revisions to the accommodation plan shall be made in writing, signed by the student and the disability consultant and shared as needed with identified parties. Any needed changes that result from different course or program requirements shall be discussed first with the faculty member prior to any revisions to the accommodation plan.
 - 2.06 Graduate programs may include requirements and evaluative elements such as independent research, thesis development, writing and defense, field work, and community placements; as such, the ALC disability consultant may contact the graduate coordinator, practicum coordinator, academic advisor and/or the Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies Office for any feedback or considerations regarding essential course, placement or program requirements while constructing the accommodation plan.
 - 2.07 Graduate student accommodation notification will be shared with student consent via confidential email with the graduate coordinator of the program, the practicum coordinator, the



2.3 Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY

Waterloo | Brantford | Kitchener | Toronto

academic advisor (as appropriate) and the Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies Office. The information contained within the initial email serves as a confirmation of registration; the disability consultant and the student will be in contact with the faculty member to discuss progress and need for accommodation considerations as the need arises. The coordinator of the program will ensure that registration information is shared with faculty by term and course.

- 2.08 Subsequent revisions to the graduate accommodation plan due either to changes in the student's needs or to different course or program requirements shall be negotiated among the student, the Accessible Learning Centre, graduate coordinator, practicum coordinator, academic advisor, Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies Office and the appropriate faculty member. Any revisions to the accommodation plan shall be made in writing, signed by the student and the disability consultant and shared with all relevant parties. When any accommodation plan affects Faculty of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies regulations (e.g. time to complete the degree) the graduate coordinator or designate will consult with the Dean of Graduate Studies & Postdoctoral Studies (or designate).

Accommodation Access for Placements/Practicum

- 3.00 If a practicum, placement or community service learning (CSL), is an essential element of a program, the student must consider access to accommodation while on site. Students are encouraged to discuss this consideration with their disability consultant as their accommodation plan is being developed.
- 4.00 It is the student's responsibility to disclose the need for accommodation during a community placement. The student can discuss this with their instructor, community service learning coordinator and/or the coordinator of the program who will review the accommodation requirements of the student and the potential impact of the accommodations on the essential duties required for the community placement. The student's placement agency will not be informed of the student's accommodation unless there is a need to know and the student consents to the sharing of this information.
- 5.00 If a placement or practicum is a requirement for a program (e.g. Master of Social Work or Bachelor of Education), with the student's consent, the disability consultant will confidentially inform the practicum team of the student's need for accommodation. The practicum coordinator will then invite the student to meet to discuss accommodations recommended for placement. The student's field advisor will then be notified. The student's placement agency will not be informed of the student's accommodations unless there is a need to know (e.g. a level of risk for the student and/or others has been identified) or the student consents to the sharing of this information.
- 6.00 Accessible Learning is available to meet and discuss accommodation needs and implementation strategies to support the student completing their placement or practicum requirements. The student will always be a part of this process.

Resolution of Accommodation Disputes

- 7.00 The accommodation review process will be applied by examining each issue on a case by case basis. A transparent dispute resolution mechanism will be followed.
- 7.01 In cases where the instructor, the student and the Accessible Learning Centre cannot agree on the provision of a determined accommodation as it has been deemed by the faculty member to compromise the essential requirements of the respective course/program, efforts to determine a reasonable alternative accommodation will be employed.
- 7.02 If an alternative accommodation cannot be determined through discussion among the student, the instructor and the Accessible Learning Centre, the matter will be referred to the Chair of the program (or equivalent). Any required meetings between the concerned parties will be scheduled as soon as possible in an effort to resolve the issue as expeditiously as possible. Accessible Learning will be available as a resource to provide clarification on the accommodation policy and related procedures. Students may appeal to the appropriate faculty petitions



2.3 Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY

Waterloo | Brantford | Kitchener | Toronto

committee any decision which impacts their academic standing that the student believes is caused by a failure to provide reasonable accommodation.

- 7.03 In the event that the Chair of the department/program believes that a proposed accommodation compromises the essential requirements of a course and a mutually supported decision cannot be achieved or resolved via the petition process, the matter will be brought to the attention of the Dean (or designate) of the student's Faculty. The Dean will discuss these concerns with all associated parties (e.g. the department, the student, and ALC) and will decide upon an appropriate course of action as expeditiously as possible. The Dean of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies will be the first point of contact for all graduate students.
- 7.04 If at any time during the accommodation planning and/or review process, the instructor, the Chair/Program Coordinator or the Dean (or designate) decide that there are substantial financial or health and safety implications to granting a requested accommodation, the plan will be forwarded directly to the Provost and Vice President Academic. All required parties will be consulted in an effort to ensure resolution.
- 7.05 The dignity of the person will be considered when addressing any health and safety risks. A proportionate response will be applied. When a risk is identified, the least intrusive means to address risk will be applied.

Appeals to the Senate Student Appeals Committee

- 8.00 Should a satisfactory response not be achieved at the Decanal level, a student may refer to the Senate Student Appeals Committee (SSAC) on grounds of procedural error or reasonableness of the accommodation. The Procedures for Considering Appeals by the Senate Student Appeals Committee shall apply. This Committee will hear appeals of applications for unresolved accommodation disputes where there are permitted grounds.
- 8.01 The Senate Student Appeals Committee is the final body for students to address appeals relating to accommodation provision under this policy. Students must follow the dispute resolution process as indicated above, including faculty petition processes.
- 8.02 In response to pressing academic deadlines the Senate Student Appeals Committee can be activated at any time and will be chaired by the Provost and Vice-President Academic. The SSAC will hear the appeal within 21 days of the date the appeal is submitted to the Office of the Provost and Vice-President Academic.
- 8.03 A representative from the ALC will be available to provide information as needed to support the Committee in its review and decision making process.
- 8.04 All decisions of this Committee shall be final; there is no appeal beyond that of the Senate Student Appeals Committee.

Accommodations Pending Resolution

- 9.00 The University recognizes that decisions involving accommodations must be made expeditiously to assist students in their ongoing studies. Once a decision on an accommodation appeal has been made it shall be implemented promptly.
- 10.00 In the event that accommodations have been denied by the department chair (or equivalent) or the Dean (or equivalent), and an appeal by the student is pending, the Dean, the department chair, the coordinator of the program and the ALC shall review the accommodation plan to determine what portion, if any, of the plan is reasonable to implement immediately. It is suggested that minimal accommodations shall remain in place until there is a final disposition of all appeals.
- 11.00 Where a student has been accommodated pending the final disposition of all appeals, and such disposition is that the accommodation should not be granted, an alternative means of fairly determining



2.3 Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY

Waterloo | Brantford | Kitchener | Toronto

the student's course mark or the timing of submission of the student's work shall be determined by the department chair (or equivalent) and the instructor in consultation with the ALC (as needed), and communicated to the student. The applicable program coordinator may be consulted as determined by the department chair (or equivalent).

- 12.00 In some circumstances the Dean may, in his/her discretion, agree to withdraw a student retroactively from a course or program without financial or academic penalty to the student. The Registrar's Office will be kept informed of any change that impacts a student's enrolment status.