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<b>Responsible/Originating Departments:</b>	Associate Vice-President, Academic Associate Provost, Campus Support and Accessibility
<b>Executive Contact:</b>	Associate Provost, Campus Support and Accessibility

## 1. Purpose

- 1.1. In general, these procedures outline process and responsibilities in furtherance of the University's accommodation commitments and obligations under Policy 19 - Student Academic Disability Accommodations.
- 1.2. Guidelines created and implemented by AccessAbility Services in furtherance of operationalizing this policy are listed on AccessAbility Services' website and may include:
  - Guidelines for referring students to AccessAbility Services.
  - Guidelines to facilitate timely academic accommodations.
  - Guidelines for protecting personal health information.
  - Guidelines for documentation requirements.
  - Guidelines for the development and use of essential requirements in relation to the duty to accommodate.

## 2. Principles

- 2.1. The Student accommodation process, including all meetings, is always intended to arrive at the most reasonable accommodation for Students. This process is based on the presumption that better solutions are achieved when discussed directly with the Student.
- 2.2. A Student has the right to support. This includes being accompanied by a support person in any procedure under or associated with Policy 19 - Student Academic Disability Accommodations. Support persons may accompany Students seeking an accommodation to assist with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs, and/or to provide moral and emotional support to the Student.
- 2.3. The procedures are informed by, and will be guided by, principles of fairness and due process.
- 2.4. Accommodation requests, including retroactive accommodation requests, will be considered in good faith.

## 3. Process for Establishing Academic Accommodations

- 3.1. The student submits an application to register with AccessAbility Services through the AccessAbility Services website as soon as the need for accommodation becomes known, to make the nature of their Disability and/or their accommodation needs known.

- 3.2. The student submits any supporting documentation directly to AccessAbility Services, and never to their Course Instructor, Graduate Supervisor, Academic Administrator, or Academic Advisor. Medical documentation is not required to apply to register with AccessAbility Services, as Interim Accommodations can be provided pending documentation.
- 3.3. AccessAbility Services staff assess documentation to determine Disability status and eligibility for academic accommodations, and whether further documentation is required.
- 3.4. AccessAbility Services will invite the Student by email to book a virtual or in-person appointment with AccessAbility Services to actively participate in planning and discussing their needs, and to finalize their individualized Accommodation Plan. Students requiring graduate milestone accommodations or the academic requirements of cooperative education accommodations will book an appointment with an Accommodation Consultant to request their approved accommodations within that context.
- 3.5. For course-based accommodations, Students request their eligible course-based accommodations, alternate format, and testing accommodations, using AccessAbility Services' online system, in accordance with AccessAbility Services guidelines. This system triggers the Faculty Notification Letter, which is a necessary mechanism to activate and implement accommodations. For milestone accommodations, Students will complete and sign the required AccessAbility Services form(s) and provide consent to send the form(s) to their Graduate Supervisor (or graduate officer, graduate coordinator, or other administrator, depending on the accommodation).
- 3.6. For course-based accommodations, the approved Accommodation Plan is communicated from AccessAbility Services to each Course Instructor via the Faculty Notification Letter. Graduate milestone accommodations will be communicated via email to the Graduate Student's Supervisor or relevant administrator (such as a graduate officer or graduate coordinator), as the case may be.
- 3.7. The Course Instructor or Graduate Student's Supervisor (or graduate officer or graduate coordinator or other administrator, depending on the accommodation) will enable the academic accommodation and will participate in the accommodation process as required. Where a Course Instructor or Graduate Student's Supervisor believes the academic accommodation is not suitable, or is concerned about the appropriateness of the accommodation, the dispute resolution process shall be engaged.
- 3.8. Where an Accommodation Plan is not meeting a Student's needs, or when the Student's condition or learning environment has changed, the Student should contact AccessAbility Services to initiate review of their Plan.
- 3.9. The Course Instructor or Graduate Student's Supervisor contacts AccessAbility Services if they have questions about or concerns with the Accommodation Plan. The Accommodation Plan may be amended as needed, in consultation with the Student.

#### **4. Dispute Resolution**

- 4.1. A Student or Course Instructor or Graduate Student's Supervisor might disagree with any of the following:

- The approved academic accommodation or approved academic accommodation solution.
- The Accommodation Plan as designed by AccessAbility Services.
- The services or supports offered by AccessAbility Services.

4.2. Depending on the nature of the dispute, there are two informal dispute resolution processes that will be engaged prior to the formal dispute processes:

- Academic Accommodation Dispute Resolution Process.
- Accommodation Plan Dispute Resolution Process.

4.3. In any informal or formal dispute resolution process outlined in these procedures, a Student's Accommodation Plan, as defined by AccessAbility Services, will apply until a decision is made.

## 5. Dispute Resolution Processes

### 5.1. *Academic Accommodation Dispute Resolution (Informal)*

- 5.1.1. This informal process governs disputes with an academic accommodation and or the outcome. For example, where a Course Instructor believes that allowing the specific accommodation would cause undue hardship because it would fundamentally alter the course's essential requirements, or where a Course Instructor believes the Student was already accommodated through other means.
- 5.1.2. To initiate the process, a Student or Course Instructor or Graduate Student's Supervisor emails AccessAbility Services indicating a dispute with a current academic accommodation.
- 5.1.3. AccessAbility Services responds to the parties to set up separate meetings as required. The meetings will be held to attempt to understand and resolve the academic accommodation dispute, including whether an alternate and equivalent academic accommodation can be implemented.
- 5.1.4. If it becomes apparent that the academic accommodation dispute cannot be resolved with these parties, AccessAbility Services contacts the relevant department or program to resolve the matter informally, as described in AccessAbility Services guidelines.
- 5.1.5. AccessAbility Services communicates the decision and any changes to the academic accommodation to the Student.

### 5.2. *Accommodation Plan Dispute Resolution Process (Informal)*

- 5.2.1. This informal process governs disputes with the Accommodation Plan as designed by AccessAbility Services and/or the services and supports offered by AccessAbility Services.
- 5.2.2. To initiate the process, Students first speak with an Accommodation Consultant to discuss their concerns.
- 5.2.3. If the matter is not resolved, the matter may be escalated to the AccessAbility Services' Manager, Student Accommodations, and then the Associate Director, if needed.

5.2.4. AccessAbility Services communicates the decision and any changes to the Accommodation Plan to the Student.

### 5.3. *Formal Dispute Resolution Process*

5.3.1. If the accommodation dispute cannot be resolved informally, the Student may seek relief by filing a petition or grievance in accordance with Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances.

## **6. Retroactive Accommodation Procedures**

### 6.1. *Retroactive Accommodation Process prior to completion of a course or when actively pursuing an academic milestone*

6.1.1. Students must notify AccessAbility Services in writing of their request for a Retroactive Accommodation for a specific course or milestone, as soon as the need becomes known. Course Instructors or Graduate Student's Supervisors should refer Students who request a Retroactive Accommodation to AccessAbility Services.

6.1.2. Students not already registered with AccessAbility Services will be asked to first apply to AccessAbility Services and indicate in their application that they are seeking support for a Retroactive Accommodation.

6.1.3. AccessAbility Services staff will:

- Review the request, and any provided documentation, to determine the need for a Retroactive Accommodation; and/or
- Assess whether further documentation or information is required.

6.1.4. As necessary, the Student will be invited to make an appointment with AccessAbility Services to discuss the request for a Retroactive Accommodation. AccessAbility Services may ask the Student to obtain and/or submit additional medical documentation to support their request for a Retroactive Accommodation.

6.1.5. If AccessAbility Services determines a Retroactive Accommodation is required prior to completion of a course or milestone, AccessAbility Services notifies the Course Instructor or Graduate Student's Supervisor of the need to provide a Retroactive Accommodation. AccessAbility Services collaborates with the Course Instructor or Graduate Student Supervisor to determine the most appropriate Retroactive Accommodation considering all the information. If a Course Instructor or Graduate Student's Supervisor disputes the accommodation solution offered by AccessAbility Service, the informal dispute process in section 7.6.1 may be followed.

6.1.6. If AccessAbility Services determines that the Student is not eligible for Retroactive Accommodations, the decision will be provided to the Student in person or in writing. Students may request a meeting with AccessAbility Services to ask questions or seek clarification.

6.2. *Retroactive Accommodation after a milestone or completion of a course or after graduation*

6.2.1. If the Retroactive Accommodation is for a milestone or completed course, the Student will seek a Retroactive Accommodation via a petition under Policy 70, indicating a request for Retroactive Accommodation.

6.2.2. If the Retroactive Accommodation is for a milestone or a completed course, and the Student has graduated from the University, the Student will seek a Retroactive Accommodation via a petition under Policy 70, indicating a request for Retroactive Accommodation.

## **7. Student Supports**

Students have access to guidance and supports regarding their policy options, that may include:

- Academic Advisors
- Associate Deans
- Peer or student support associations
- Office of the Ombudsperson

## Appendix A – Glossary

**Accommodation Plan.** Accommodation Plans are designed and facilitated by AccessAbility Services and are individualized and tailored to the Disability-based needs of Students within their academic environment.

**Academic Administrators.** Associate Deans, Chairs/Associate Chairs, Directors/Associate Directors, or their delegates.

**Academic Advisor.** Includes undergraduate Faculty (such as Arts, Engineering, Health...) advisors, as indicated on Faculty websites. For graduate students, this includes graduate coordinators or graduate officers.

**Course Instructor.** The individual assigned in Quest to teach and manage a course and can include regular and part-time faculty members, sessionals, staff instructors, visiting faculty, and Course Instructor's delegate. The definition also encompasses the supervisor of an undergraduate student's project or research. If a course is delegated to someone other than the individual assigned in Quest, AccessAbility Services must be notified of this delegation at the beginning of each term.

**Disability.** The term "disability" is defined as follows in the Ontario Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990, c.H.19, as amended from time to time:

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

**Faculty Notification Letter.** The communication, sent by email, from AccessAbility Services to the Course Instructor with the Accommodation Plan.

**Graduate Student's Supervisor.** A faculty member who is acting as a graduate student's supervisor, as understood in the Graduate Studies Academic Calendar regulations. If a Student has co-supervisors, one will be assigned as the primary point of contact for milestone/non-course degree requirement accommodations.

**Interim Accommodation.** Temporary, reasonable academic accommodations that are implemented on a good-faith basis while an accommodation request is under review or while a Student is in an assessment process of diagnosis, and/or obtaining medical documentation, and/or are experiencing barriers in the health care system.

**Retroactive Accommodation.** Requests for an academic accommodation that arise after a deadline or the completion of an examination/test, academic milestone, or course.

**Student.** An individual who is registered and has paid fees or arranged to pay their fees at the University of Waterloo, or individuals who were students and are now seeking a Retroactive Accommodation.