

Policy #	<i>Assigned by Assist. To Associate VP Administration</i>
Approved by:	<i>Executive Team or Board of Governors, if applicable</i>
Approval Date:	<i>By Executive Team and BOG, where deemed appropriate</i>
Policy Holder Signature:	<i>Signature of Vice President responsible for the policy</i>
Policy Holder:	<i>Title of VP</i>
Administrative Contact:	<i>Manager, Dean, Director, Registrar etc.</i>
Replaces Policy Dated:	<i>Date of last approved policy</i>
Review Date:	<i>Date for next review; max. 5 years</i>

Academic Accommodations Policy

Purpose/Rationale:

The Humber College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning and the University of Guelph-Humber (hereafter referred to as “Humber and Guelph-Humber” or “The College”) is committed to creating inclusive, equitable, and respectful learning environments to ensure full and meaningful participation of learners in their academic programs. We recognize that inclusive practices anticipate diverse learners' needs through advanced curriculum planning, course delivery, and learning environments aligned with the principles of inclusive design. We acknowledge that learners with disabilities may still experience barriers to their full and meaningful participation. The College adheres to its obligations under Humber’s Human Rights Policy, the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 \(AODA\)](#), and the [Ontario Human Rights Code, 1990 \(OHRC, hereafter referred to as “the Human Rights Code”\)](#) in advancing accessible and inclusive practices, prohibiting disability-based discrimination, and implementing appropriate accommodations for learners with disabilities. As our academic landscapes continue to change, and we move closer to future adaptation of the proposed Postsecondary Education Standards under the AODA, The College will support commitments to removing barriers by adopting a social model of accommodation practices in alignment with values focused on cultural responsiveness and environmental factors that foster thriving, view learners with disabilities as active contributors to citizenship, affording flexibility to accessing learning that account for unique strengths and abilities, empowering learners in advocacy, and collaborations within the institution to reframe academic policies and procedures that hinder inclusive access to support and services.

Scope:

This policy acknowledges that the provision of academic accommodations is a shared responsibility between the Humber and Guelph-Humber community and the learner.

Extenuating circumstances (i.e., unforeseen acute or transient personal circumstances) should be considered on compassionate grounds through academic consideration but are not generally matters of this policy. All other matters outside of disability-related protected grounds would be addressed outside of this policy; other accommodations based on other code protected grounds as per the *Ontario Human Rights Code* (e.g., religion, family status) are covered in other Humber issued policies.

This policy applies to all members of the Humber and Guelph-Humber community (i.e., employees and learners at Humber and Guelph-Humber) engaged in the delivery of academic programs and courses. This policy also applies to contractors, third-party service providers, and partners associated with academic programs and courses (e.g., Work Integrated Learning, hereafter referred to as “WIL”).

Policy Principles:

1. Humber and Guelph-Humber will fulfill its duty to accommodate as outlined in the *Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990 c. H. 19 (the Human Rights Code)* by providing individualized and dignified approaches to learner accommodation up to the point of undue hardship.
2. Maintain learner confidentiality as it relates to personal and health information in accordance with The College’s obligations under *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. Personal information of learners will only be shared to the degree necessary to consider requests for academic accommodations, to determine the appropriateness and reasonableness of academic accommodations, to consider accommodations upon dispute or appeal, or where required by law.
3. Any disputes about appropriate and reasonable accommodations will be quickly escalated to the respective administrators for resolution.
4. Humber and Guelph-Humber share responsibility with WIL hosts for properly carrying out learner accommodation requested up to the point of undue hardship.

Roles and Responsibilities

The **learner** is expected to:

- Make needs for accommodation known to Accessible Learning Services (hereafter referred to as ‘ALS’) in a timely manner.
- Provide information or appropriately participate in the enquiry process, as required, about relevant functional impacts, including information from health care professionals, as needed to evaluate accommodation needs in consideration to program learning outcomes.

- Take an active role in discussions about possible accommodation options, recognizing best and available options are the objective.
- Purposefully engage in efforts to action recommendations made by ALS to enhance their learning experience and skill building.
- Work with ALS to support communication of accommodation requests to faculty.
- Participate in the accommodation process on an ongoing basis.

ALS is expected to:

- Meet with learners and meaningfully consider all requests for accommodation due to functional impacts.
- Where appropriate, establish a recommended accommodation plan, either temporary, interim, or long-term in nature, to minimize functional impacts for learners in the academic context.
- Work with the learner to support communication of accommodation requests to academic faculty.
- Maintain learner confidentiality relating to specific diagnoses or disabilities,
- Facilitate professional development and act as a resource to faculty and administrators regarding the implementation of specific accommodation requests through clarification and/or development of strategies, where possible, for balancing inclusion, academic rigor or health and safety considerations.
- Consult proactively with faculty, administrators, and other relevant stakeholders, where significant upfront planning will be required to meet a specific accommodation request.

Faculty members are expected to:

- Design and deliver course materials according to inclusive design principles to meet the needs of a diverse group of learners.
- When sourcing and creating course materials, provide a variety of formats based on diverse learners needs to ensure accessible content.
- Be aware of the accommodation resources available to learners through ALS, and other campus partner, and effectively refer them to those resources.
- Familiarize themselves with the training and support resources, information, handbooks, etc. available to them at Humber and Guelph-Humber regarding the implementation of academic accommodations and the provision of accessible course materials.
- Recognize the difference between academic accommodation requests associated with accessibility needs, which are communicated through Accommodation Letters and/or through direct consultations with ALS, and requests for academic consideration/flexibility that address unexpected extenuating or personal circumstances.

- Safeguard communication regarding academic accommodations to protect the dignity and privacy of learners.
- Review each accommodation letter upon receipt to ensure essential requirements are maintained and seek clarification with the ALS consultant or designate, where necessary.
- Implement the required academic accommodations in collaboration with the learner.
- Negotiation of accommodation measures are to be facilitated or coordinated on behalf of the learner through ALS.
- If resolution on a specific accommodation measure cannot be achieved, communicate with the direct supervisor.

Campus Partners are expected to:

- The College's service areas play a critical role in the success of implementation of the policy and its associated procedure by developing their own policies and procedures that compliment best practices to support the diverse needs of learners with disabilities.
- Understanding their respective roles in the accommodation process whether that be establishing partnerships with ALS or providing their own training and tools to support learners, and other administrators and faculty.
- Making the appropriate referrals to ALS or other campus partners when made known of an accommodation request or accessibility need.
- Facilitate communication and awareness regarding available resources within their respective areas that support or enhance the learning environment to minimize barriers to accessing said resources.
- Advocate for the needs of learners with disabilities.
- Ensure dedicated time, planning and financial allocations are afforded for consideration when learners with disabilities are accessing their respective areas or services.

Accountability

- All members of Humber and Guelph-Humber College must comply with the terms in this policy and the Academic Accommodation Procedure for Learners with Disabilities.
- This policy is administered by Accessible Learning Services in determining reasonable and appropriate accommodations through the interactive process, and shall be reviewed in accordance within those terms.

Review

This policy shall be reviewed every five (5) years from the date it comes into effect. The policy may be reviewed at a shorter duration than the five (5) year term where it is determined that is necessary, as it relates to, but not limited to:

1. A change in the law respecting policy and procedural mandates for meeting the needs of learners with disabilities through the accommodation process;
2. A substantive change in The College's practices or procedures; or
3. Any subsequent factor with material impact to the application of the policy in its current state.

Definitions:

Academic accommodations: individual arrangements (educational practices, approaches, services, strategies, adaptations, and/or adjustments to the method of curriculum delivery or core content of a course or program) designed to limit barriers that impact the ability of learners with disabilities to fully participate in their academic program. Academic accommodations are developed based on functional impacts experienced by the learner as it relates to their disability and the academic/learning environment.

All members of the College (faculty, staff, and learners) share in the duty to accommodate learners under the *Human Rights Code*.

Academic consideration: timely and individual arrangements made by a faculty member, independent of ALS, on compassionate grounds in response to a learner facing extenuating and unforeseen personal circumstances (such as a death in the family, sudden housing and financial insecurities or brief illness where medical documentation should not be required) in an effort to enable learners to meet all essential academic requirements of their course or program and maintain learner well-being.

Considerations include but are not limited to an excused absence, an extended or deferred deadline; a modified schedule for assignments, labs, placements, projects, or exams; an alternate assignment; a re-weighting of assigned marks; or other arrangements deemed appropriate.

Accessible content: curriculum content, digital or hard copies of information, resources or media that are designed and presented in a way that is easily understood and used by a wide range of learners, including those living with disabilities, allowing learners to synthesize, produce, maintain, and engage independently and effectively in learning and related activities. Examples of such content includes, electronic reading materials designed to be compatible with text-to-speech technology, audio and video content with accessibility considerations, such as a version of the video with description of visual information integrated in the main audio, and description available as text captions, and a descriptive transcript.

Accessible Learning Services: transdisciplinary team with expertise in disability, academic accommodations, and assistive technology. This team is comprised of

Accessible Learning Coordinators, Accessible Learning Consultants, and Accessible Learning Advisors.

Accommodation Letter (AL): the confidential communication of accommodations that the learner receives from ALS. The AL will detail approved accommodations; however, the learner has the right to determine which of those accommodations they would like to activate and under which learning context. The AL may be delivered to the faculty by the learner or by a member of the ALS team.

Appropriate (reasonable) accommodation: a form of academic accommodation which addresses the impacts experienced by a learner as a result of their disability(ies) in a manner that allows them equitable access and opportunity to meet the essential academic requirements of a course or program, without resulting in undue hardship to the College.

Campus partners: departmental areas outside of ALS that act as collaborators, referrals or resources that form part of the academic divisions, Student Success and Engagement/Student Wellbeing and Equitable Learning, or other institutional areas that are required or needed to support learners with disabilities, included but not limited to, Student Learning Services, Centre of Innovative Learning, Libraries, Facilities, Financial Aid Office, etc.

Disability: defined in the *Human Rights Code* as

- 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; (“handicap”)

Duty to accommodate is informed by three principles: respect for dignity, individualization, and full participation. The *Human Rights Code* prohibits discrimination that results from requirements or qualifications that may appear neutral but have an adverse effect on people with disabilities. In some instances, a requirement that results in discrimination may nevertheless be reasonable and *bona fide* (legitimate). However, to establish this, the College must show that the needs of the person cannot be accommodated without undue hardship.

To determine whether the duty to accommodate has been met the College needs to identify that the standard, requirement or rule:

1. was adopted for a purpose or goal that is rationally connected to the function being performed,
2. was adopted in good faith, in the belief that it is necessary for the fulfilment of the purpose or goal, and,
3. is reasonably necessary to accomplish its purpose or goal, in the sense that it is impossible to accommodate the individual without undue hardship.

Essential academic requirements: the knowledge and skills that a learner must acquire and demonstrate in order to meet the learning outcomes of a course or program of study. While it may be an essential requirement that a learner master core aspect of a course curriculum, it is less likely that the means in which a learner demonstrates the mastery will be essential, unless mastery of that format is also a vital requirement of that course or program.

Functional impacts: a disability-related impediment or challenge that affects a learner's ability to function in their daily activities of life, and consequently, in the learning environment. Functional impacts often disadvantage a learner academically and may require accommodations for the learner to have equitable access to the curriculum. These impacts can be short-term (less than six months), chronic (12 months and greater) or present as episodic flare-ups of an unpredictable nature.

Inclusive design: "design that considers the full range of human diversity with respect to ability, language, culture, gender, age, and other forms of human difference" (Inclusive Design Research Centre, 2020).

For learners with disabilities, inclusive teaching practices aim at minimizing the consequences of functional impacts and removing barriers to learning by planning ahead for a variance of learning needs.

Interim academic accommodation: academic accommodations which are short-term in nature and offered in good faith pending further information required to fully understand the breadth and depth of functional impacts experienced by a learner related to their disability.

Learners with disabilities: All learners enrolled in a course or program at Humber who identify as having a disability.

Social model of disability: it is a shift in perspective related to viewing the construct of disability and those that live with disabilities. The person living with the disability is not viewed as the cause for not participating in society, however, it is the lack of consideration and design in the physical, social, and economic environments which create barriers, discriminatory practices and oppressive language and tendencies that prevent full inclusion.

Undue hardship: the outer limit of the College’s accommodation obligation, and is to be considered individually, within the full context of a particular request for accommodation.

The following elements may be considered in determining if providing an accommodation would cause undue hardship:

1. the cost of providing the accommodation,
2. the availability of outside sources of funding, if any; and
3. health and safety requirements, if any.

Work Integrated Learning (WIL): a model and process of curricular experiential education which formally and intentionally integrates a learner’s academic studies within a workplace or practice setting. These work-integrated and experiential learning opportunities may include field placements, practicums, clinical placements, cooperative education work terms, internships, applied research projects, or service learning.

References

- [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 \(AODA\)](#)
- Accessibility Policy, Humber and Guelph-Humber, HR107, Last revised September 1, 2020
- [American Psychological Association-Disability Models](#)
- [Inclusive Design Research Centre](#)
- [Ontario Human Rights Code, R.S.O, 1990 c.H. 19 \(OHRC\)](#)
- [Western University Policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#)

Related Procedure(s):

Academic Accommodation Procedures for Learners with Disabilities
Faculty Handbook and SWEL Faculty Handbook
ALS Student Handbook