

# Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Policy

**Category:** Academic – Students, Teaching, Faculty

**Approval:** Senate

**Responsibility:** Associate Vice-President Students

**Date:** March 12, 2013

Trent University's vision includes support for a diversity of faculty, staff and students who share a commitment to the learning experience and are responsive to its challenges. The University commits to building an inclusive intellectual and social community that values the collaboration of all its individual members.

## **Definitions:**

**Statutory Definitions:** Statutory definitions, as set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter H.19 can be found at

(URL: [www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws\\_statutes\\_90h19\\_e.htm#BK12](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90h19_e.htm#BK12))

## **Disability:**

- (a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, 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 development disability;
- (c) a learning disability, or 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.

## **Non-Statutory Definitions**

**Accommodation:** A reactive response to an accessibility barrier and individualized adaptation or adjustment made to provide a person with a disability with equitable and non-discriminatory opportunities for participation. Accommodation is an adaptation or adjustment made to enable a student with a disability to perform the essential duties or requirements of their role as a student in meeting the learning objectives and expectations of the courses in which they register. The requirement, qualification or factor must be reasonable and bona-fide in the circumstances. Accommodation may include, but is not limited to:

- human support services such as sign language interpreters, Note-takers, readers, lab assistants, etc.
- technical aids and assistive devices
- workstation and/or office modifications
- alternate format materials (where appropriate and supported by documentation on file with the Disability Services Office (DSO))
- flexible or alternative deadlines (where appropriate and supported by the documentation on file with
- DSO)
- Test and Exam Support – Provided through the Centre for Academic Testing (CAT)

### **Purpose/Reason for Policy:**

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide a clear statement of the obligations of the University to accommodate students with disabilities and
- provide guidance and standards for the implementation of an accommodation plan.

### **Scope of this Policy:**

The policy applies to any Trent student with a disability and to applicants that may require accommodation during the Trent admissions process at both the Peterborough and Durham/GTA campuses.

### **Policy Statement:**

#### **Objectives**

Within the guidelines of the Ontario Human Rights Code, the University commits to:

- achieving a culture and learning environment that is supportive of students with disabilities;
- ensuring that each student with a disability will be considered on a case-by-case basis in order to determine accommodation requirements;
- establishing an efficient accommodation process that clarifies the roles within the Trent community and that supports the principles of confidentiality and shared responsibility; and
- ensuring compliance with all applicable legislation, collective agreement provisions and University policy.

#### **Principles**

Trent University commits to:

- sharing accountability and responsibility between the student requiring accommodation and instructors, supervisors, senior management, and the University;
- respecting the dignity and autonomy of the individual by ensuring the student is involved in planning the accommodation and that it meets the student's specific circumstances;
- respecting confidentiality by involving only relevant stakeholders in the development of the accommodation plan.
- ensuring that students are not disadvantaged in any way as a result of seeking accommodation;

- applying universal design principles in both the physical and instructional environment on campus;
- consulting with appropriate disability specialists in order to validate medical and/or disability information and determine individual accommodation requirements and to consult on specific accommodation issues on an ongoing basis.

## **Responsibilities**

Support and commitment to accommodation for students with disabilities is a community responsibility. The Accessibility for Ontarians with a Disability Act (AODA) requires a proactive approach to accommodating persons with disabilities. Instructors, supervisors, and senior administrators bear responsibility to ensure that their actions are in compliance with the policy, the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

### **1. Disability Services Office**

The Disability Services Office is responsible for:

- accepting the student's request for accommodation in good faith;
- reviewing the diagnostic documentation and its appropriateness for supporting the requested accommodations;
- responding to accommodation issues as expediently as possible;
- determining and implementing accommodation requirements while working in partnership with the student and any internal and external resources that are required;
- recommending appropriate accommodations, facilitating the integration of the student being accommodated, and ensuring a supportive learning environment;
- keeping a record of the accommodation request and action taken;
- providing education and support to faculty and other students on accommodation issues;
- ensuring that appropriate confidentiality is maintained;
- ensuring the policy is consistently and fairly applied in a manner that is compliant with existing legislation and established best practices;
- ensuring that the needs of persons with disabilities are addressed in the recruitment and admissions process;
- providing and/or facilitating accommodation;
- collaborating with instructors, staff and students in applying this policy and developing accommodation plans;
- communicating the availability of accommodation to students;
- ensuring the policy is interpreted and applied to promote the University's interest in supporting a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students;
- producing an annual guideline/glossary document on academic accommodations for faculty.

### **2. Person with a Disability**

A Student requesting accommodation is responsible for:

- advising the Disability Services Office of the need for accommodation, to the best of his or her ability and in a timely manner;
- providing documentation from the diagnosing professional in regards to the disability;
- answering questions or providing information regarding relevant restrictions or limitations, including information from health care providers, as needed;

- participating in discussions regarding possible accommodation solutions and co-operating with any experts whose assistance is required to manage the accommodation process;
- complying with the accommodation plan as implemented;
- advising the Disability Services Office immediately of any change in circumstance that affects the accommodation plan. Note: Applicants to Trent are responsible for advising the Disability Services Office in advance of any disability accommodations that may be required during the admissions process.

### 3. Instructors

Instructors with students who require accommodations are responsible for:

- implementing approved academic accommodations as determined by the DSO in conjunction with the student with a disability. Where there is a concern with the required academic accommodation, a consultation meeting should take place with the instructor, the student and the Disability Advisor to resolve the concern;
- reviewing, when requested, course content and delivery and adapting this content and/or delivery to facilitate the reduction and the removal of identified academic barriers to learning for students with disabilities;
- ensuring delivery of hard copies of the exams to the Centre for Academic Testing (CAT) or the Disability Services Office - Trent Durham/GTA at least two working days prior to the exam date. In addition to the hard copy, an accessible electronic copy of the exam is to be sent, at least one working day in advance, to the CAT's secure e-mail address: examshuttle@trentu.ca for accessible format use during the exam;
  - arranging for the collection of completed exams on or after the time specified by the CAT or DSO Trent Durham/GTA;
  - providing a phone number or email where staff at the CAT or DSO – Trent Durham/GTA can contact them or their designate during the session where students are sitting their exam because clarification of exam content may be required. Alternatively, instructors may provide the CAT with a time when they will connect with or stop by the CAT or DSO – Trent Durham/GTA to provide such access.

### 4. Administration

- The Associate Vice-President Students assumes overall accountability for the interpretation and application of this policy;
- Senior Executives must ensure appropriate resources and services are available to carry out accommodation under this policy and have overall accountability for the University accommodation policy and program, including ensuring the University is in compliance with all legislative requirements.

### 5. Unions

Unions acknowledge responsibility of members to abide by this policy and will assist Trent University in ensuring it is followed.

#### Contact Officer:

Associate Vice-President Students

#### Date for Next Review:

March 2019

#### Related Policies, Procedures & Guidelines

- a) AODA, Persons with Disabilities, Customer Service Standard

**Policies Superseded by This Policy:**

- a) N/A