



POLICY TYPE:	Academic
POLICY TITLE:	Students with Disabilities Policy
POLICY NO.:	ACAD-009
RESPONSIBILITY:	OntarioLearn Policy Committee
POLICY APPROVED BY:	OntarioLearn Board of Directors
EFFECTIVE DATE:	March 2011
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Introduction

OntarioLearn and its member colleges are committed to providing students with an inclusive learning environment that promotes equal rights for all persons with disabilities as set out in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. OntarioLearn and its member colleges recognize that a successful inclusive learning environment is achieved as a result of shared responsibility and commitment on the part of all members.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to inform, guide and establish the framework by which students and host colleges/registering colleges address academic accommodation requests for students with disabilities.

Definitions

Academic accommodation refers to the educational practices, systems, and support services designed to accommodate functional challenges due to a disability.

Assistive Device is a technical aid, communication device or other instrument that is used to maintain or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities. Such devices could be a wheel chair, walker, scooter, cane, magnification or specialized learning software, communication board, etc.

Disability as defined by AODA, refers to:

- 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 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.

Host college refers to the college who owns/delivers the course.

Office for Students with Disabilities/ Accessibility Services: Individual colleges use different names for their office which provides services to students with disabilities. For the purpose of this policy/procedure, the disability/accessibility centres are referred to as the “Office for Students with Disabilities/ Accessibility Services”.

Reasonable accommodations refers to accommodations which do not impose undue hardship the form of significant changes to the fundamental nature of the learning outcomes.

Registering college refers to the College where the student is registered.

Support Person – as reflected in *Ontario Regulation 429/07*, a support person means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or access to goods and services.

Undue hardship - as reflected in *Ontario Human Rights Code*, a college is obligated to provide accommodation up to the point of undue hardship. Undue hardship refers to the capacity limit of a college to accommodate the student. A college is not expected to provide accommodation if doing so would bring unreasonable difficulties based on cost, availability of funding or health and safety considerations.

Policy statements

1. Guiding Principles

- a. Each student has the right to access education in an environment that promotes individual dignity, equality, and respect.
 - b. All students without exception must meet the academic standards of their courses.
 - c. The academic accommodation process is a cooperative process, involving shared responsibilities among the student requesting accommodation, the registering college and the host college.
 - d. A college is obligated to provide accommodation up to the point of undue hardship.
2. All OntarioLearn member colleges through their " Office for Students with Disabilities/Accessibility Services" provide educational support services for students with disabilities.
 3. Students with disabilities are required to contact the “Office for Students with Disabilities/ Accessibility Services” at their registering college. Early identification is

encouraged so that appropriate accommodations can be put in place in a timely manner.

4. The host college/instructor will provide academic accommodations for students with disabilities as determined by the “Office for Students with Disabilities/ Accessibility Services” at their registering college.
5. OntarioLearn will assist all member colleges to provide reasonable academic accommodations for students with disabilities that takes into account the student’s accessibility needs that are relevant to their activity through OntarioLearn. This may include, but is not limited to:
 - a. Working with the host college and registering college relating pre-arranged extended course access requests for a student with a disability.
 - b. Arranging for appropriate course access for designated support persons, upon request.
 - c. Arranging for appropriate course access for designated college staff who are tasked with creating any course documents in an alternate format, upon request.
6. All students are required to meet all technological requirements to pursue an online course. Students with disabilities are permitted to use their own assistive devices.
7. OntarioLearn permits course access to designated support persons to support any official student accommodation.
8. All partner colleges and OntarioLearn are subject to the legal requirements respecting the collection, use, disclosure and retention of personal information set out in the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. Any personal information regarding an official academic accommodation request is only disclosed on a “need to know” basis where the information is required to perform the accommodation.

Accessibility and AODA considerations

OntarioLearn’s commitment to accessibility and AODA standards has been considered in the development of this policy.

Roles and responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all member colleges to ensure that accommodation opportunities are available to their students with disabilities.

It is the responsibility of all member colleges to ensure that faculty and staff are aware of their obligations and services available to their students with disabilities.

It is the responsibility of the student to self-identify with the “Office for Students with Disabilities/Accessibility Services” at their registering college.

It is the responsibility of the registering college to facilitate/manage all academic accommodation requests from their registered students.

It is the responsibility of the host college/course instructor to implement the accommodation plans of students with disabilities, where appropriate.

Non-compliance implications

Failure on the part of the student to initiate an official accommodation request in a timely manner could result in the refusal of the request.

Failure to comply puts the individual college at risk of inequitable treatment of students.

Failure to comply with this policy could impact OntarioLearn's ability to effectively conduct its operations in all areas and leave the consortium in contravention of federal and provincial legislation and directives, and commonly accepted business practices and professional ethics.

Failure to comply with applicable federal and provincial legislation could result in legal costs arising from potential lawsuits for non-compliance.

Failure to comply with this policy could result in damage to OntarioLearn and/or the member colleges' reputation, human rights challenges, or potential legal or other sanctions against OntarioLearn.

Communications Plan

The registering college is responsible for publishing/communicating details related to accessibility services and processes to their students.

Related policies, procedures and directives

Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy (ADMIN-001)

Alternate Format Policy (ACAD-010) (under development)

Alternate Format Procedure (ACAD-010.1) (under development)

Integrated Accessibility Standards (ADMIN-002)

Students with Disabilities Procedure (ACAD-009.1)

[Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11](#)

[O. Reg. 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards](#)

[O. Reg. 429/07: Accessibility Standards for Customer Service](#)