

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES



**THOMPSON
RIVERS
UNIVERSITY**

805 TRU Way
Kamloops, BC V2C 0C8
tru.ca

POLICY NUMBER	BRD 10-0
AUTHORITY	Board of Governors
CATEGORY	Board
PRIMARY CONTACT	Dean Of Students
ADMINISTRATIVE CONTACT	(TBD)

POLICY

The University embraces diversity and welcomes the contributions, experiences and participation of all students, including students with disabilities, as valued members of its community. The University affirms its responsibility to provide an accessible and inclusive educational environment for all its students. The University is committed to providing reasonable academic accommodations for students with diagnosed disabilities in a manner that is consistent with its educational mandate, academic principles, and legal obligations.

The University's objective is to provide access to educational opportunities for students with disabilities by reducing the physical, attitudinal and systemic barriers experienced by students with disabilities.

Through Accessibility Services, the University shall assist students with disabilities who self-identify and seek academic accommodations. While the University is responsible for providing appropriate and reasonable accommodations, students with disabilities are equally responsible for meeting their course and program requirements and for participating in their own accommodations.

REGULATIONS

1. Legal Framework & Responsibility

The University shall provide academic accommodation to students with disabilities in accordance with the Human Rights Code (British Columbia). The provision of academic accommodation will not undermine the academic standards of the University, nor will it remove the need for evaluation or the student's responsibility to meet the essential learning requirements of their courses and programs, including requisite licensing processes or field practicums. Admission to the University does not guarantee that all recommended or requested academic accommodations will be granted.

The University is responsible for providing (to the point of undue hardship) an accessible and supportive environment, which ensures equality of educational opportunity for all its students, including students with disabilities.

Although an academic accommodation will be facilitated through Accessibility Services, the responsibility for implementing academic accommodation is shared among faculty, staff, administration and the student.

2. Scope

The policy applies to students:

- a. admitted to or enrolled in a TRU credit course or program, whether delivered on campus or through Open Learning; and
- b. with a diagnosed disability who self-identify and who, as a result of their disability, require academic accommodations to reduce or eliminate the barrier preventing their access to the academic opportunity available to other students.

3. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions apply:

a. Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities are persons who:

- i. have a significant and long-term or recurring mobility, sensory, learning, episodic, other physical or mental health impairment; and
- ii. experience functional restrictions or limitations of their abilities to perform the range of life's activities including the daily activities necessary to participate in studies at a post-secondary level.

b. Academic Accommodation

An academic accommodation involves the removal of barriers for students with disabilities in such a way that respects their dignity and provides them with equal access to course information and educational opportunities. An academic accommodation may involve an adaptation or alteration to the physical and/or instructional environment. These may include, but are not limited to, the provision of alternate formats and methods of communication, the use of adaptive technology, and adaptations to the examination environment and/or mode of delivery. An academic accommodation may be provided on an interim basis for students who are in the process of being assessed for a disability.

c. Documentation

Documentation refers to a written document that provides relevant, detailed information about the functional impact of the student's disability. The documentation must provide detailed information about:

- the functional impact of the disability;
- how the disability limits or restricts the student's studies;
- proposed accommodations, alterations or measures to facilitate the student's studies; and
- the expected progression and duration of any graduated or modified study program.

A diagnosis alone is not sufficient documentation to support a recommendation for accommodation, nor is a diagnosis necessary in order to receive accommodation. Documentation must be relevant, current (normally within 3-5 years of the date of submission depending on documentation type), and comprehensive. It must be completed by at least one certified health care professional who has expertise in the area of functional impact for which the accommodation(s) and/or service(s) are being recommended. If requested by Accessibility Services, documentation must be corroborated by a second health care professional. Examples of such professionals include: General Physicians, registered clinical Psychologists, Psychiatrists, Ophthalmologists, certified Audiologists, and Neurologists.

d. Essential Requirements

The Essential Requirements of a course/program include, but are not limited to, the acquisition and demonstration of the knowledge and skills that are normally required to pass and complete a course/program or licensing process.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

a. The University

It is the role and responsibility of all staff and faculty of the University to:

- i. Ensure that persons with disabilities are given equal consideration, with respect to the University's admission criteria, for admission to all programs offered by the University for which they are academically qualified;
- ii. Provide reasonable accommodations, to the point of undue hardship to the University, to students with disabilities in accordance with the Human Rights Code (British Columbia);
- iii. Participate in access to accommodation as directed by Accessibility Services for course/program components where disability functions as a barrier to a student participating equitably in the educational material or experience, while upholding the essential requirements of the course/program;
- iv. Refer students with disabilities to Accessibility Services so documentation can be reviewed to ensure it provides the required information to support decisions regarding accommodations;

- v. Determine essential requirements for courses/programs where there is a dispute about the academic accommodations compromising essential requirements.

b. Accessibility Services

It is the role and responsibility of Accessibility Services staff to:

- i. Ensure that faculty, administrators, and staff are aware of and knowledgeable about relevant University policies and procedures and have a familiarity with access and disability related issues.
- ii. Distribute each student's accommodation plan to the appropriate intermediary for each program/faculty to notify of approved accommodations each semester. Normally, the intermediary will be the faculty responsible for the student's course.
- iii. Ensure that the personal and private information about a student with a disability is handled in a confidential manner and in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (BC). Only information relevant and essential to the academic accommodation process, such as the impact or functional limitations of a disability or condition, can be disclosed on a need-to-know basis.
- iv. Keep the Accessibility Services website up to date with important deadlines and procedural and other significant information.

c. Students with Disabilities

It is the role and responsibility of every student with a disability who is seeking academic accommodation or service due to his/her disability to:

- i. Meet the academic requirements for admission to, and continuance in, their courses and program of choice;
- ii. Contact Accessibility Services for assistance in a timely manner in order to allow for the assessment and arrangement of accommodations;
- iii. Provide Accessibility Services with documentation;
- iv. Contact Accessibility Services and meet with an Accessibility Services Advisor at the start of each semester and as required from time to time;
- v. Follow the necessary processes and procedures, and meet the established deadlines for accessing and arranging accommodations and services, as outlined by Accessibility Services;
- vi. Communicate with the appropriate faculty/instructional staff and Accessibility Services regarding the fulfillment of accommodations and any concerns as they arise;

- vii. Pay for any costs incurred in acquiring the documentation.

5. Limitations to Accommodations

Although the University has an obligation to make the necessary efforts to reasonably accommodate a student with a disability, to the point of undue hardship to the University, when the nature and/or the degree of the disability precludes a student from fulfilling the essential requirements of a course/program the University may determine that no reasonable accommodation would enable a student to fulfill the essential requirements of a course/program.

In cases such as this, the University is not required to accommodate. However, the University must establish that no reasonable accommodation would allow the student to meet the course/program's essential requirements.