

AC202: Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Policy Title:	Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
Policy Number:	AC202
Owner:	Sr. Vice President, Academic and Student Success
Approved by:	Senior Leadership Team
Effective Date:	September 2026
Reference:	Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005), Ontario Human Rights Code (1990), Ontario Human Rights Commission's Guidelines on Accessible Education, (2004), Policy on Preventing Discrimination Based on Mental Health Disabilities and Addictions (2014).
See also:	AC205: Universal Capture of Learning Experiences AC505: Placement SLC Students AC515: Academic Assessment

St. Lawrence College is committed to making our resources fully accessible to all persons. This document will be made available in alternative format upon request.

BACKGROUND

St. Lawrence College is committed to fostering a welcoming, inclusive, and barrier-free environment. The College affirms the rights of prospective and current students with disabilities to have equitable access to educational opportunities and provides appropriate academic accommodations, when needed, up to the point of undue hardship.

Definitions:

Academic Accommodation (hereafter referred to only as "accommodation"):

- Educational practices, systems, and individualized support services designed to identify and remove disability-related barriers and to equalize opportunity for a person with a disability to meet the essential requirements for admission to, and achievement of, the documented learning outcomes of a course or program;
- Extends distinctly beyond a standard level of service provided for the general population;

- Provides an equitable opportunity to attain the same level of performance, and/or to enjoy the same level of educational benefits experienced by others.

Interim Accommodation: An accommodation provided to a student that is temporary in nature, implemented without delay while the formal accommodation process continues. The period of time for which interim accommodations are provided depends on a number of factors, including access to a health care provider, availability of health care providers in the community, location of the student's health care provider, and the time it takes to acquire sufficient medical documentation.

Permanent Accommodation: An accommodation that is provided to a student whose functional limitations are expected to have an impact for the duration of the study period, based on documentation provided by a regulated and qualified health care provider.

Retroactive Accommodation: An accommodation that is provided to a student after a learning activity has taken place or a course is completed, as the result of identified functional limitations that existed at the time of the learning activity of which the student was previously unaware or that interfered with their ability to follow typical processes and procedures.

Temporary Accommodation: An accommodation that is provided to a student whose functional limitations are expected to have an impact for a limited period of time based on assessment and/or the documentation provided by a health care provider, as required by Student Wellness & Accessibility.

College Designate (for the purpose of this policy): The assigned Accessibility Advisor or Counsellor within the College's Student Wellness & Accessibility department.

Disability: As defined by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005) and the Ontario Human Rights Code (1990), a disability is:

- Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation, or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect, or illness;
- 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).

Functional Limitations: Identified area(s) of challenge, caused by and/or related to a disability, that impact academic performance and are used to identify appropriate accommodations.

Regulated and Qualified Health Care Provider (hereafter referred to only as “health care provider”): a professional who is authorized by law to practice a specific health profession, and who is qualified to assess, diagnose, and/or treat a specific disability and/or medical condition. This is typically a licensed professional (e.g., doctor, psychologist, psychiatrist, medical specialist, etc.) working within their regulated scope of practice and who has expertise with the relevant disability and/or medical condition.

Undue Hardship: Under the Ontario Human Rights Code (1990), the College, as a post-secondary educational institution, is required to accommodate students with disabilities to the point of undue hardship. In the test for undue hardship, three considerations apply:

- The cost of providing the accommodation;
- The availability of outside sources of funding, if any; and
- Health and safety requirements, if applicable.

The onus of proof to demonstrate undue hardship is the responsibility of the College and not the student requesting accommodation.

Inconvenience, faculty, and student morale, third party preferences, and collective agreements are not relevant in the test of undue hardship.

Purpose:

To outline definitions, responsibilities, and procedures that apply to the provision of academic accommodations for prospective and current students with disabilities that comply with the requirements of all relevant legislation.

Scope:

This policy applies to all qualified prospective and current students who self-identify as having a disability and are registered with Student Wellness & Accessibility. It applies to all full-time or part-time programs and courses, in all learning environments, including but not limited to the classroom, laboratory, online, and placement.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

1. The College is committed to creating an accessible learning environment and strives to eliminate attitudinal, academic, and physical barriers that hinder the academic success of students with disabilities.
2. The College affirms that academic accommodations for students with documented disabilities are a right, not a privilege.
3. The College further affirms its commitment to the following principles:
 - Dignity – Treating students with disabilities as valued, and as deserving of effective service, as any other student, and ensuring they are free from the control or influence of others and permitted to make their own choices.
 - Individualization – Ensuring that each student with a disability is treated as a unique individual with unique accommodation needs.
 - Inclusion – Ensuring students with disabilities are provided with opportunities to benefit fully from the same services, provided in the same place and in the same or similar manner as all other students.
 - Full Participation – Ensuring that students with disabilities have the same or similar choices, options, and benefits as all other students.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. Student Wellness & Accessibility is the College department responsible for the formal accommodation process for students with disabilities.
2. Accommodations for students with disabilities are to be determined on an individual basis by the College Designate within the Student Wellness & Accessibility department at the College.
3. Accommodation decisions will be based on the information provided through:
 - i. Supporting documentation provided by the student from a health care provider;
 - ii. The student's self-report of functional limitations in the post-secondary academic environment and throughout past learning and/or education experiences;
 - iii. the student's program of study;
 - iv. And other relevant information and sources, as applicable and appropriate.
4. In accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Commission, the College does not require students to disclose a diagnosis in order to access accommodations or accessibility-related services.
 - 4.1. External and third-party funding programs may require documentation that includes a diagnosis as part of their eligibility criteria.
5. The accommodation process is collaborative in nature and requires active participation from multiple parties, including students, Student Wellness & Accessibility, College faculty and staff, and external partners.
6. Students with disabilities must fully participate in the formal accommodation process through Student Wellness & Accessibility. Participation involves:
 - 6.1. Voluntarily disclosure of their disability and/or need for accommodations with the Student Wellness & Accessibility department at the College;
 - 6.2. Submission of requests for accommodations as soon as the student becomes aware of their disability and their need for accommodations in the learning environment, ideally before their learning activities begin;
7. The College will not disclose or include information pertaining to registration with Student Wellness & Accessibility or a student's accommodations on any

- official document provided by the College, such as credential (e.g., certificate, diploma, degree), transcript, grade reports, recommendations for scholarships, agency bursaries, or references to other post-secondary institutions.
8. All students, including students with disabilities, must meet the academic standards set by the College in order to graduate with an academic credential from the College. The duty to accommodate does not require the College to fundamentally alter admission standards or essential program and/or course requirements.
 - 8.1. Accommodations may alter the ways in which essential skills and abilities are demonstrated by the student.
 - 8.2. In order to meet this requirement, it may limit the types of accommodations that can be provided to the student by the College.
 9. The College has an obligation to consider the health and safety of all students, College staff, and members of the public when assessing and determining accommodations. In some circumstances, the functional limitations experienced by a student with a disability, or the related accommodations, may represent a potential risk to the health and safety of others and may limit possible accommodation options.
 - 9.1. In circumstances where health and safety risks are present, all possible accommodations will be explored and meaningfully considered. The student may be asked to provide additional documentation from health care providers to aid in establishing accommodations that meet health and safety requirements as well as course and program requirements.
 10. Where alternate accommodations need to be explored due to undue hardship and/or essential requirements, the College will make reasonable effort to ensure that the outcome is agreeable to all involved parties.
 11. Accommodations may be established, reviewed, and/or updated at any time during a student's program of study, so long as the student engages in the process outlined by Student Wellness & Accessibility.
 - 11.1. It is recognized that accommodation needs may develop or change over a student's academic journey based on a variety of factors, such as onset of a disability, diagnosis of a disability, changes to functional limitations related to a

disability, and interaction between the learning environment and/or learning activities and a disability.

- 11.2. Where a student becomes aware of a disability and/or impact of functional limitations during their program of study and may need accommodations, the student should self-refer or be referred to Student Wellness & Accessibility for assistance.
12. Where issues or challenges arise related to a student's accommodation needs, or where there is difficulty in meeting those needs, Student Wellness & Accessibility may engage in consultation with faculty members, other College staff, and/or external service providers, as necessary and with the student's explicit consent, to support the implementation of appropriate accommodations.

Accommodation Disagreements and Disputes

If a dispute arises concerning the recommended and/or provided accommodation(s) for a student with a disability, the student may choose to discuss the issue with their College Designate and/or the Associate Director, Student Wellness & Accessibility. If the dispute cannot be resolved at this level, the Associate Director, Student Wellness & Accessibility will provide further guidance regarding next steps in the process.

MONITORING

All areas of the College are accountable for ensuring that the principles of accessibility and equity outlined in this policy are upheld. However, it is the responsibility of the Senior Vice-President, Academic & Student Success to ensure that this policy is reviewed every five years, and more often if required, to ensure adherence to developing law.

NEXT POLICY REVISION DATE

September 2031

SPECIFIC LINKS

[Appendices: Procedures for Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities](#)

[Student Wellness & Accessibility Functional Assessment Form](#)