



COLUMBIA COLLEGE

**HANDBOOK FOR STUDENTS
WITH DISABILITIES**

2014

Table of Contents

Columbia College’s Obligation to Accommodate	4
Important Legal Principles.....	5
Protected Areas and Grounds under The Human Rights Act	7
Students Eligible for Services	9
Disability Services Staff	11
What is the Procedure for Admission?	12
How Do I Arrange for Accommodations?.....	13
Importance of Timelines	14
Ongoing Arrangements	15
Appeal Process.....	16
What is the Procedure if a Disability is Discovered after You Have Started Your Program	17
Reduced Course Load	18
Practicum Placements/Work Experience Information.....	19
Confidentiality	21
How Accessible is the Campus for Students with Disabilities?	22
Other Services.....	23
What are Some Examples of Possible Accommodations and Services?	24
Audio Taping of Lectures	28
What Specific Accommodations are Possible for My Type of Disability?	29
What Funding is Available for Students with Disabilities?.....	32
How Do I Arrange for Alternate Format Materials?	37
Resources	38
Columbia College: Students with Disabilities Checklist	40

Welcome to Columbia College!

We are glad you have chosen Columbia College as your educational institution. It is our commitment to assist you in any way possible to be successful.

This Handbook provides you with the steps you need to take to get approval for reasonable accommodations and presents other information that might be of use to you when planning to attend Columbia College. There is also a section for students who have a non-permanent condition (transitory illness) and need special accommodation on a short-term basis.

Accommodations are the process of making alterations to the delivery of services so that those services become accessible to more people, including people with disabilities. In educational environments, the goal of accommodating students with disabilities is to ensure full participation in all aspects of their educational experience. (Columbia College Accommodation Policy for Students with Disabilities)

As the above definition states, accommodations are intended to remove barriers to learning and help students to master course content while maintaining the academic standards and objectives of the course and program of studies. Accommodation does not relieve the student of his/her responsibility to develop the essential skills and competencies expected of all students upon graduation.

The provision of accommodation is based on shared responsibilities between the student and the College and is determined on an individual basis.

The College recommends that a student who is seeking accommodations have all assessments, accommodation plan, and accommodation needs in place before starting their program.

Please note that Columbia College Disability Services are at no cost to you. Costs are associated with accommodations requested and funding may be available to you. All services are private and confidential and will not be stated on your transcript of marks. Medical assessments are stored in confidence with the Registrar's office with restricted access.

Lucy Dooley
Manager Student Services

Columbia College's Obligation to Accommodate

Columbia College is required to provide reasonable accommodation to students with disabilities to the point of undue hardship as outlined in the *Columbia College Accommodation Policy for Students with Disabilities*. As well, the Human Rights Commission has prepared a document entitled *Duty to Accommodate Students in Post-secondary Educational Institutions* (located at *Alberta Human Rights website*).

Important Legal Principles

Legal principles from case law provide direction on a wide range of issues important to the provision of services in the education sector. The following lists some of the more specific principles that apply to accommodating students with disabilities in an educational institution. (*Duty to Accommodate Students with Disabilities in Post-secondary Educational Institutions – Interpretive Bulletin Sept. 2010*)

Education-Specific Duty to Accommodate Principles ***AHR Act – Alberta Human Rights Act***

Jurisdiction

1. The AHR Act applies to the provision of all services in the educational setting, including extracurricular services such as those provided by clubs and the students' union.
2. Students with disabilities have the right to access services and environments generally available to other students in the same course or program.

Reasonable and justifiable requirements

3. The educational institution may establish the necessary requirements and essential elements of a course or program. If the student does not meet the requirements and/or participate in the essential elements, this would amount to an undue hardship for the institution.
4. Assessments or evaluations of a student's work must be based on ability or performance and not on the presence of a disability.

Responsibility of students and institutions in the accommodation process

5. Students must provide reasonable documentation of their disability if they want to be accommodated.
6. A student's past decision not to disclose that they have a disability does not prevent the possibility of present or future accommodation.
7. Educators may be responsible for accommodating a student who has not disclosed a disability where the disability is obvious.
8. Both the student and educator are responsible for working towards a successful accommodation strategy.
9. Educators have a duty to seek professional advice and guidance outside their own area of expertise during an accommodation process.
10. Educational institutions must demonstrate that they have considered a range of possible accommodations. Documentation of the process and conclusions are required.
11. Students have a duty to be open to trying different options for accommodation, even though they may not be the exact accommodations requested.

Determining undue hardship

12. Educational institutions must demonstrate that the benefits of a rule outweigh the costs of reducing the participation of a student with a disability or a group of students with disabilities.
13. The point of undue hardship related to cost is only reached when the institution has made a rigorous attempt to estimate the costs of accommodating the student with a disability. These costs, if incurred, must have a significant negative effect on the viability of the program, service, or organization.
14. The point of undue hardship related to safety is often only reached when:
 - the safety concern is borne by persons other than the person seeking the accommodation and
 - the safety hazard outweighs the negative effect that the policy, rule, or standard imposes on persons with disabilities.
15. Students are entitled to reasonable accommodations to the point of undue hardship. There is no duty to provide instant or perfect accommodation.

Protected Areas and Grounds under The Human Rights Act

Protected Grounds

The *Act* provides protection from discrimination under the following grounds:

- Race – Belonging to a group of people related by common heritage.
- Religious belief - System of belief, worship and conduct (includes Native Spirituality).
- Colour – Colour of person’s skin. This includes, but is not limited to, racial slurs, jokes, stereotyping, and verbal and physical harassment.
- Gender – Being male, female, or transgender. Also protected under gender are pregnancy and sexual harassment.
- Physical disability – Any degree of physical disability, deformity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by injury, birth defect or illness. This includes, but is not limited to, epilepsy; paralysis; amputation; lack of physical coordination; visual, hearing and speech impediments; and physical reliance on a guide dog, wheelchair or their remedial appliance or device.
- Mental disability – Any mental disorder, developmental disorder or learning disorder regardless of the cause or duration of the disorder.
- Marital status – The state of being married, single, widowed, divorced, separated, or living with a person in a conjugal relationship outside of marriage.
- Ancestry – Belonging to a group of people related by a common heritage.
- Age – Age is defined in the *Act* as “18 years or older.” Persons who are 18 years or older can make complaints on the grounds of age in all of these areas:
 - Statements, publications, notices, signs, symbols, emblems or other representations that are published, issued or displayed before the public
 - Employment practices
 - Employment applications or advertisements
 - Membership in trade unions, employers’ organizations or occupational associations

It is important to know that age is not a protected ground in the areas of tenancy, goods, services, accommodations or facilities.
- Place of origin – Place of birth.
- Family status – Being related to another person by blood, marriage, or adoption.

- Source of income – Source of income is defined by the *Act* as lawful source of income. The protected ground of source of income includes any income that attracts a social stigma to its recipients, for example, social assistance, disability pension, and income supplements for seniors. Income that does not result in social stigma would not be included in the ground.
- Sexual Orientation -This ground includes protection from differential treatment based on a person's actual or presumed sexual orientation, whether homosexual, heterosexual or bisexual.

In addition to the areas and grounds discussed above, the *Act* protects Albertans in the area of equal pay. When employees of any sex (female, male or transgender) perform the same or substantially similar work, they must be paid at the same rate.

Students Eligible for Services

Students who need an accommodation must be registered with Columbia College Disability Services Office. In order to do this, please contact Bldg. 802, Administration, (403) 235-9300 or email disabilityservices@columbia.ab.ca.

Students eligible for services are:

1. Students with documented permanent disabilities
2. Students with a chronic condition
3. Students with a temporary (transitory) illness or impairment

Students with documented permanent disabilities: Students should have their documentation ready upon application.

Students with a chronic condition: A chronic condition is a condition that continues to exist for a student or is a recurring condition. Examples are diabetes, Crone's disease etc.

Students with a temporary (transitory) illness or impairment: Some examples of a temporary illness or impairment are:

- Recovering from surgery
- Pregnancy that requires special considerations
- Side-effects from a required prescription
- Broken arm or leg
- We may be able to arrange for short-term accommodations for temporary medical conditions. Much depends on the type of illness or impairment and the length of time that will be needed for the accommodation. For example, a student who undergoes surgery and cannot return to school for a month, may be asked to step out until the recovery is complete. On the other hand, a student who has surgery and needs to frequently stand up in class would be granted this accommodation. Documentation must be provided before an accommodation will be granted.

Students with Permanent Disabilities

Permanent Disability – is a functional limitation caused by a physical or mental impairment that restricts the ability of a person to perform the daily activities necessary to participate in studies at the post-secondary level or the labour force. The disability is expected to remain with the person for the person's expected natural life

Source: <http://studentaid.alberta.ca>

Services for Students with Disabilities

Columbia College offers the following services for Students with Disabilities:

- Planning for reasonable accommodations
- Advising regarding disability-related academic matters
- Assistance in accessing government funds for disability-related services or equipment
- Assistance with securing exam writing accommodations
- Assistance with securing Note-taking support
- Assistance with securing Tutoring
- Assistance with securing Academic Strategist support
- Assistance with securing Assistive technology training and support
- Assistance with planning for field placement (practicum, work experience)
- Assistance in converting print materials to alternate formats
- Classroom accommodations
- Library resources assistance
- Advocacy

Disability Services Staff

Manager Student Services – Lucy Dooley

- Responsible for the overall management of Disability Services

Disability Services Lead – Doug Leong

- Responsible for the administration and coordination of Disability Services within the Student Services Department

Test/Exam Assessment staff – Learning Services Administrator

- Responsible for administration and coordination of accommodated tests/exams

Alternate Format Services – Learning Services Administrator

- Responsible for supporting students with disabilities who require alternate format materials

Adapted Technology Support – Doug Leong

- Responsible for supporting students in this area. As a private school, students are responsible for securing assistive technology, computers, etc.

Academic Strategists – To be arranged according to student needs.

- Responsible for supporting students with disabilities with academic strategy support

What is the Procedure for Admission?

Students with disabilities are expected to:

1. Follow the admission process as outlined in the calendar.
2. A student may identify that he/she has a disability when applying to the College by indicating this information on the application form. Once this self-identification has taken place, a Disability Services Advisor will call you.
3. If you require an accommodation in order to take the Columbia College Assessment, you should discuss this with the Disability Services Advisor. Appropriate documentation is required for assessment accommodations.
4. Review the Columbia College Accommodation Policy for Students with Disabilities and the Handbook for Students with Disabilities.
5. A student must register with Disability Services in order to receive services.
6. Please be aware that students must have all the accommodations in place before they can begin their program.
7. Students may be asked to spend time as a Student for a Day in the program they have chosen to ensure that the program chosen is suitable for the individual. This request may be made of any student planning to attend a program at Columbia College.

How Do I Arrange for Accommodations?

Please review in detail the Columbia College Accommodations Policy for Students with Disabilities. The following is a brief outline of the process:

1. Book an appointment to meet with a Disability Services Advisor to discuss your needs. You can contact Disability Services by emailing disabilityservices@columbia.ab.ca, or filling out an appointment form at the Administration Office, Bldg. 802, or phoning (403) 235-9300.
2. For the initial meeting with the Disability Services Advisor bring documentation in support of your request for accommodation. Documentation is treated as medical information. It is confidential and kept on file by the Disability Services Advisor. It will not be shared with your facilitators or anyone else in the College without your permission. General Documentation guidelines: (Please note specific requirements located in the Columbia College Accommodation Policy for Students with Disabilities)
3. You will be asked to register with Disability Services by filling out a registration form. You will also be asked to sign information release forms in accordance with privacy and confidentiality requirements.
4. Discuss any accommodations or supports needed with the Disability Services Advisor. The Disability Service Advisor will fill out a form that outlines your request for accommodations. This form will be submitted to the Disability Services Lead and to the Manager of Student Services for approval.
5. For funded services such as assistive technology, academic strategist support, alternate format materials, note-taker, exam reader/scribe, and interpreter, you will be given information on how to access funding to cover their cost.
6. Your request for accommodation will be reviewed, and in most cases, you will receive a written response within 15 business days. A delay may occur if further investigation of accommodations requested is needed.
7. The Disability Services Advisor will work with you to develop a written accommodation plan based on the approved accommodations. Response time may vary if the accommodation requires consultation outside of the College or additional research.
8. The Disability Services Advisor will prepare a Letter of Accommodation regarding the required accommodations that have been granted and this will be forwarded to the Program Chair/designate for discussion with your facilitators prior to the start of classes. You will receive a copy of this letter.
9. An application for funding will be completed as soon as accommodations are determined and any requirements for special funding are met. Since applying for and securing funding can be a lengthy process (8 weeks or more), it is important to begin the accommodation process early. Your funding application will be done by your Admission Advisor and Disability Services Advisor who are responsible for different parts of the application. Please be aware that all accommodations must be in place before a student may begin their program.
10. While your facilitators will know you are coming and know which accommodations are being provided, you may wish to prepare a Letter of Introduction to give to the facilitator or may wish to arrange a meeting to speak with your facilitators. Meeting with facilitators should be arranged through the Program Chair/designate or Coordinator.

Importance of Timelines

- Applying for grants (Canada Study Grant can take up to 8 weeks for approval). If not approved, you can apply for DRES (Disability Related Employment Services) funding, which can take another two months or more for approval. In some cases student loan and DRES funding may be required.
- Alternate format of textbooks require adequate time to organize and prepare. Some textbooks can take up to one month to secure or prepare in an alternate format.
- Exam accommodations. Students should speak to their facilitators and make arrangements for their exams a minimum of 5 school days prior to the exam date. See section on how to make arrangements for exam accommodations below.
- Meet with the Program Chair/designate or Coordinator at least a week prior to class start to review the accommodation plan.

Ongoing Arrangements

- Meet with the Program Chair/designate or Coordinator and Disability Services Advisor at the beginning of each semester (pre-career programs) and at least once or twice during the certificate or diploma program in order to review your accommodation plan. The student is responsible for initiating this review.
- Make an appointment with the Disability Service Advisor if you have any concerns or are facing any barriers to your academic success. Another source of support is your Program Chair or Coordinator.

Appeal Process

Students wishing to appeal a decision regarding accommodations or a decision with regard to any special requirements of a learning environment are referred to Columbia College's appeal process. (ADM-P177 – Student Appeals Policy). This policy is available on the Columbia College website at www.columbia.ab.ca or by contacting the Administration Office, Bldg. 802 for a copy.

In order to be able to make an appeal, you must have fulfilled the following responsibilities:

- Disclosed your disability to a Disability Services Advisor and registered with Disability Services
- Provided necessary current and relevant documentation of the disability
- Participated in a collaborative/consultative process to request and negotiate academic accommodations or special services.

In order to make this appeal, you must do so within five (5) business days of the receipt of the decision you wish to appeal.

In your appeal letter, please indicate the decision you are appealing, the reason why you are appealing the decision, provide any new evidence to support your appeal, and indicate what your desired outcome would be.

If the Registrar feels that you have sufficient grounds for an appeal, the Registrar will arrange for a meeting of the Appeals Committee. You will be informed of who is on the Appeals Committee as indicated in the Appeals Policy.

What is the Procedure if a Disability is Discovered after You Have Started Your Program

The same process applies as if you had identified or revealed a disability before you started your program. Please do not expect that accommodations will be provided immediately upon revealing a disability and providing documentation. Every effort will be made to manage the accommodation process as quickly as possible. It is to your advantage to have all assessments and accommodations in place prior to starting your program. This will give you the best opportunity for success.

Reduced Course Load

Is a reduced course load a good idea? – This might be a good idea. A student with a disability may elect to take a reduced course load. If you require a reduced course load, please consult with your Disability Services Advisor.

Grant funded students may obtain full time learner benefits while taking a minimum of a 40% course load each semester. The student may receive up to 50 funded months of training benefits to complete their Service Plan. Reduced course loads must be approved by an Alberta Human Services official in order to receive funding (Pre-Career Students only).

Students on Student Loan would be considered full-time students while taking a 40% course load each semester. Reduced course load must be approved by Alberta Government Student Finance before it can be implemented.

Practicum Placements/Work Experience Information

Students with disabilities may require accommodation support in clinical placements, practicum placements, or work experience. The responsibility for this arrangement lies with the Program Chair or Coordinate and those College representatives involved in placement. The Disability Services advisor may be asked to help with this process. Where a disability may make it difficult to find an acceptable placement, the student should be an active participant in this discussion.

While all efforts are made to help students with disabilities overcome barriers to a practicum placement, Columbia College is obligated to protect vulnerable people and the public in general by ensuring that students who are placed in a practicum situation are able to act professionally, and display competency and safe practice at all times.

The Columbia College Accommodation Policy for Students with Disabilities, therefore, defines the following:

- Bona fide occupational requirements (BFOR'S) are standards or rules that are integral to carrying out the functions of a specific position or occupation. Thus, there are reasonable and justifiable components of a training program that may limit entry to, or completion of, a training program.
- Bona fide educational requirements (BFER'S) are important requirements of a training program that may limit entry to, or completion of a training program due to the Bona fide occupational requirements of the specific position or occupation.

A practicum site is obligated to not refuse a placement to a student with a disability without just cause, but it may decide to seek legal advice before accepting a student about whom they may have reservations. This could delay the student's practicum start.

In the above situation, the College would continue to try to secure another placement while the original practicum site seeks legal opinion.

It may be advisable for a student with a disability to meet the host practicum site representative in order for the student to have an opportunity to present oneself. This meeting would be arranged by the Program representative. The Disability Services Advisor may also be invited by the student or Program representative to attend the meeting. The student would be prepared for the meeting by the Disability Services Advisor and the Program representative. Each student's case would require a different approach.

The role of the student - Generally, the student would discuss any accommodations that he or she may need, provide necessary information on his/her disability as requested by the host site, and ask/answer any necessary questions.

The role of the Disability Services Advisor – support the student, ensure to the advisor’s best ability that proper procedures are followed regarding the rights of the student, and help the host site understand any information regarding the student’s disability and accommodations needed.

The role of the Program Representative – arrange the meeting; facilitate the meeting; ensure to the representative’s best ability that sufficient information is provided to help the student to be successful, and where necessary, if the student is working with a vulnerable sector, that the information provided to the host site is sufficient to protect that sector.

Confidentiality

Student information is kept confidential for all students. As a student, you may wish to share information with faculty or staff, but this is your own decision.

A student with a disability will have a regular file where a copy of the Accommodation Plan and Letter of Accommodations to facilitators is kept. Confidential assessment documentation is stored in a separate file in the Registrar's office with restricted access. Other pertinent information related to disability services is stored in a file in the Disability Services office.

How Accessible is the Campus for Students with Disabilities?

A campus access map is available from the Administration office, Bldg. 802. It indicates access to building entrances, location of handi-capped washrooms, and parking.

Doors and ramps

All the buildings used by Columbia College students for their education have access ramps. Some ramps may be steeper than others. At this time there are no electronic doors.

Elevators

Building 803 has an elevator that takes students up to the third floor.

Transportation

At present, the Access Calgary bus drops off and picks up students at Bldg. 803.

Accessible Handicapped Parking

All of the buildings have designated handicapped parking. You will need to have a handicapped parking placard to hang on your windshield. A handicapped parking placard may be obtained by having your physician fill out a form that you present to Alberta Registries. For further information visit Service Alberta's website at www.servicealberta.ca or call toll-free, 310-0000.

Washroom Facilities

All our buildings have handicapped washroom facilities.

Other Services

Safewalk – Any student may request to be accompanied to their car by contacting 403-313-7709 (24 hr. contact) or Willowglen Security at 619-7704. Arrangements should be made ahead of time.

Emergency Evacuation: Students with physical limitations – Upon your acceptance to Columbia College, a staff member will be assigned to assist you to exit the building in case of fire or another emergency. This arrangement will be made by the Disability Services Advisor and the Program Chair or Coordinator.

What are Some Examples of Possible Accommodations and Services?

The following are examples of accommodations and services that may be available to the student with disabilities. Individually funded services mean that there is a fee for this service, dependent on the individual circumstances and needs of the individual. This type of service may be covered by applying for a grant. The student's documentation will state the recommended accommodations. Students who may have attended a public education institution may not have had to pay for any services, but private educational institutions do not get funds from the Alberta Government to provide disability access services.

Examples of Classroom Accommodations and Services

*Individually funded services

- Use of assistive devices (e.g. spell checkers, laptops for note-taking)*
- Use of oral and sign language interpreters*
- Permission to audiotape lectures – see information in this handbook
- Special seating and preferential seating location
- Access to facilitators' overheads, when available
- Extra breaks during class-time
- Use of note-takers* - dependent on individual circumstances and needs
- Use of adaptive technology in the classroom and labs (scanner, screen reading software, etc.)*

Examples of Test and Exam Accommodations

* Individually funded services – cost dependent on individual circumstances and needs

- Extra time to write tests/exams*
- Distraction-free environment
- Exams divided into sections in order to permit breaks
- Alternate exam formats for all or portions of the exam*
- Taped tests/exams*
- Oral tests/exams*
- Use of assistive devices (JAWS, ZoomText, etc.)*
- Use of adaptive technology (spell checkers, calculators, computers)*
- Reader or scribe*
- Access to computer

If the student with disabilities needs a reader or scribe, and has been granted this accommodation, the student is responsible for paying the reader/scribe at the time of the test/exam. Every effort should be made to avoid requiring a reader or scribe in keeping with the goal of being independent and ready for a work environment.

Specialized Academic Strategist Support

*Individually funded service – cost dependent on individual circumstances and needs

The Academic Strategist will provide disability-related academic support for students who require this service. In most cases, there is no cost to the student for Academic Strategist support unless the student requires unusual amounts of support or such specialized support that an outside source must be retained. In this case, the student would be responsible for the cost.

It may be necessary to provide additional specialized support from a program specialist where strategy implementation is needed to gain competency within a specific program. For example, the student may need both Academic Strategist support, as well as, support from a nurse facilitator in order to transfer specific strategies to gain nursing competency and skill development. This same situation may apply to any of the professional program content areas.

Examples of Specialized Academic Strategist Supports include:

- Individualized strategy training including special techniques for students with specialized needs
- Demonstrating and modeling of appropriate learning techniques
- Opportunities to practice strategies using actual course work
- Application of general strategies for task analysis, organization, time management, exam preparation and writing, test-taking, study skills, reading skills, writing skills, note-taking skills, critical thinking skills, and concentration
- Use of adaptive technologies to support strategy development

Tutoring

*Individually funded service – cost dependent on individual circumstances and needs

Students who require tutoring because of a disability will first be asked to use the tutoring services that the College provides. Should the student require more tutoring or intensive or specialized tutoring, the student would be responsible for payment of the tutor. The Disability Services Advisor will assist the student in finding a tutor, but if a tutor cannot be found, the student is responsible for finding a tutor.

Free tutoring is available to students enrolled in:

- English as a Second Language
- Academic Upgrading
- Integrated Training
- Practical Nurse Program
- Dental Assistant Professional Program
- Other professional programs – writing support is available – dependent on need

Note-Taking

*Individually funded service – cost dependent on individual circumstances and needs; volunteer or paid

Since the College programs are intended to prepare a student for employment, a note-taker would only be considered as an accommodation if all other avenues have been exhausted. Students with disabilities would be encouraged to learn how to take notes in short form, particularly as it is necessary to have this life skill for the work world. As well, when students determine what notes to take, they are in better control of their own learning.

If the above is not possible, Columbia College would first work with the student to secure volunteer note-takers for each class, unless the student does not want a volunteer note-taker. If a note-taker has to be hired, then the student is responsible for payment of the note-taker. The Disability Services Advisor will assist the student in finding a note-taker, but if a note-taker cannot be found, the student will be responsible for finding a note-taker.

Volunteer Note-taking Recruitment Procedures:

1. The Disability Services advisor will approach the class and recruit two volunteer note-takers. Two note-takers are recruited for each course. One will be the key note-taker and the other will be a back-up.
2. Columbia College will be pleased to provide a letter of acknowledgement to the note-takers at the end of the semester, recognizing this volunteer contribution should the individuals be responsible, reliable, diligent and competent. The student, who is receiving the service, should inquire if the note-takers would like to receive a letter of acknowledgement. The student will then notify their Disability Services Advisor who will prepare the letter.

Guidelines for students who require a note-taker:

- a) Be on time for class. Note-takers will not substitute for the student. If the student does not show up for the class, the paid note-taker will leave the class and will need to be reimbursed by the student. Volunteer note-takers will not take notes when the student is absent.
- b) Provide minimum 24 hours' notice to the note-taker for absence from class. Failure to do so means that a paid note-taker would be reimbursed for the class.
- c) Meet and discuss with the note-taker the type of notes you want taken. i.e. bulleted style, full sentence, etc. If the note-taker is a volunteer class member, this may not be possible.
- d) Students are responsible to pick up their notes from the note-taker.

Obtaining Alternative Format Textbooks Materials

*May be a funded service – dependent on individual circumstances and needs

Students with disabilities may require materials in different formats. Canadian copyright law permits the reproduction of published work for people with print disabilities. Print disabilities include:

- Vision loss or blindness or the inability to focus or move one's eyes
- The inability to hold or manipulate a book
- Reading disabilities

Obtaining textbooks in alternative format is a time consuming process. (See section in this handbook on How to Arrange for Alternate Format Materials)

Adaptive Technology Training

Individually funded service if costs are associated with the training.

This service provides the following:

- Demonstration and trials of adaptive technologies which address a particular learning need
- Training on specific adaptive technologies to promote learner independence

Audio Taping of Lectures

Federal and provincial legislation places an ethical and legal responsibility on all faculty and staff at Columbia College to ensure that students with disabilities are not at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to students who do not have a disability. In particular, audio taping may be an appropriate support for students where a class may have a substantial lecture component.

Permission to Audio Record Classes:

- Permission to audio record classes may only be granted through Disability Services to students who have submitted appropriate documentation that identifies this accommodation as supportive of their disability. Permission is related to the suitability of recording information in a particular course and class.
- Students for whom this is an approved accommodation will be required to complete the Audio Recording Agreement with their Disability Services Advisor, confirming that the recording will be used exclusively for the purpose of private study by the student, and the student agrees to the contents of the agreement.
- At times, this accommodation may not be appropriate, particularly where classes have personal discussion and self-disclosure. It is at the discretion of the Program Chair or Coordinator to determine if audio-recording would be a suitable accommodation.
- If the accommodation is granted, the facilitator would then be responsible for indicating when the student may begin recording a lecture and when to stop recording as the lecture has ended. No student discussion would be allowed during the lecture.
- Violation of the agreement may result in the withdrawal of the authorization to audio-record, as well as, to a review of access to similar services in the future. Violation is viewed as an academic misconduct and subject to discipline.

What Specific Accommodations are Possible for My Type of Disability?

Adapted from: <http://www.ucalgary.ca> and <http://www.mayoclinic.com>

Each disability category provides a brief description of the disability, followed by sample accommodations. This is not meant to be an all-inclusive list. Your medical documentation should indicate recommended accommodations.

Mobility

Some students with physical and mobility impairments may require physical accommodations such as those listed below. Others may not require any accommodations.

Common accommodations include:

- Assistive technology
- Note-takers
- Scribes
- Test/Exam accommodations
- Specialized transportation (e.g. for field study or practicums)

Learning Disabilities

Learning disabilities refer to a variety of disorders that affect learning. Learning disabilities are distinct from intellectual disabilities and range in severity. Often these disabilities interfere with one or more of the following important skills: oral language (e.g. listening, speaking, understanding), reading (e.g. decoding, comprehension), written language (e.g. spelling, written expression) or mathematics (e.g. computation, problem solving).

Common accommodations:

- Alternate format materials – CD, MP3, voice recording
- Copies of overheads, lecture notes
- Audio taping of lectures
- Assistive technology and training
- Note-takers/scribes
- Test/Exam accommodations
- Academic Strategist support
- Preferential seating

Attention Disorders

Some students have been diagnosed with attention disorders such as ADHD (Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder) or ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder). These students will typically have difficulty sustaining attention. They may also present as impulsive, easily distractible, and restless. Two other areas of possible difficulty are time management and organization. This could appear to be a difficulty with being on time for classes and exams and getting assignments in on time.

Common accommodations:

- Preferential seating at front of class in order to minimize distraction and assist the student in focusing
- Test/Exam accommodations, including extra time and/or exams in a distraction-free environment or small group
- Audio taping of lectures
- Assistive Technology
- Use of audio systems to reduce environmental distractors
- Extra breaks, moving around to help with refocusing
- Use of audio systems to reduce environmental distractors
- Academic Strategist support

Deaf or hard of hearing

A hearing impairment is a condition involving the entire range of hearing loss. A student may use sign language, speech reading and other non-verbal means of communication. Hard of hearing refers to a less severe condition of hearing loss.

Common accommodations:

- Interpreting services
- CART services (Communication Access as Real-Time)
- Amplification systems
- Tutoring or scribe services
- Provision of all assignments in written format
- Test/Exam accommodations
- Closed captioned films
- Preferential seating

Mental Health

Some students have been diagnosed with psychiatric disabilities such as anxiety disorders, depression, bipolar disorder, or schizophrenia.

Common accommodations:

- Test/Exam accommodations, often the use of a distraction-free environment
- Audio taping of lectures
- Accommodations regarding timelines for assignments as a result of periods of illness
- Accommodations for attendance or lates

Common supports:

- Personal Development Coaching
- Stress Management Training
- Time management and study skills training
- Advocacy

Visual Impairment

Visual impairment reflects a range of vision from legal blindness too impairments such as color blindness, tunnel vision, night blindness, and a lack of visual acuity.

Common accommodations:

- Alternate format material (Braille, CD, MP3 or enlarged print)
- Preferential seating in class
- Note-taker or scribe
- Audio taping of lectures
- Visual aid software, Braille, magnifier or other assistive devices
- Test/Exam accommodations
- Voice recognition software, scanner or other assistive technology
- Extra breaks to avoid eyestrain

What Funding is Available for Students with Disabilities?

If you are a student with a documented disability, you may be eligible for government funding for assistive services (examples include tutoring, note-taking, interpretation, assistive technology and other such supports). For students who are transitioning from high school to a college education, individual learning supports have a cost attached to them, and these are not funded in the same way as they were when you were in school.

Funding for the cost of disability related supports can come from a variety of sources including Workers Compensation Board, private insurance companies, Canada Student Loan or provincial government disability services. Grants are sources of funding that do not have to be paid back. Student Loans have to be paid back, but there are grants and bursaries built into student loans. Therefore, the student does not usually pay back the entire loan.

Please check Student Aid Alberta at <http://studentaid.alberta.ca>

As a student with a permanent disability, you may be eligible to receive the following funding: Canada Student Grant for students with Permanent Disabilities up to \$2,000 per each loan year to help with the costs of your education and living costs due to your permanent disability (accommodations, tuition, and books)

Canada Student Grant for Services and Equipment for students with Permanent Disabilities Up to \$8,000 per year for students with permanent disabilities who have exceptional education-related costs such as tutors, note-takers, interpreters, brailers or technical aids and/or Alberta Grant for Students with Permanent Disabilities Up to \$3,000 per year for students not eligible for federal funding; applies to services/equipment.

In general, if you are applying for Canada Student Loans, you may be eligible to access the Canada Student Grant for students with Permanent Disabilities. Please review the information and instructions on the back of Schedule 4 of the Student Loan form. Schedule 4 and supporting documentation is forwarded to a government Career & Employment Consultant for verification of a permanent disability and appropriateness of the recommended accommodations. The Consultant will forward the application to Students Finance for processing and send you a letter advising you of the accommodations that have been recommended to be funded through the grant. The consultant may request to meet or speak with you regarding your application. Once you are approved for funding as a student with a permanent disability, you are automatically considered on Canada Student Grant for Students with Permanent Disabilities in your future applications, and do not need to submit another Schedule 4. However, you will need to submit a new Schedule 4 in each study period/session you request a grant for assistive services and equipment.

Grant money cannot be used for other purposes. You must submit receipts to prove you used it as specified. Make sure you get receipts from tutors and other service providers.

If you are not eligible for Canada Student Loans, you may be eligible for funding from provincial services. In Alberta, services may be covered by DRES (Disability Related Employment Supports) funding, which can be accessed through Alberta Human Services.

A learner with a disability must apply for a Canada Student Loan and the Canada Student Grant for Services and Equipment for Persons with Permanent Disabilities if your program of study is designated for loan funding. Columbia College's professional programs are all eligible for Student Loan Funding. Pre-Career programs are not eligible for Student Loans. All sources of funding must be accessed before applying for DRES. DRES support may be requested if the student's needs are greater than the \$8000 available through the Canada Student Grant for Services and Equipment for students with Permanent Disabilities.

Please refer to Alberta Alberta Human Services at <http://humanservices.alberta.ca>

Students may also apply for the Alberta Skills Investment Grant to cover their education and living costs. Where a student is on AISH, the student should consult with their worker. You would meet with the Disability Services Advisor who will work with you to create a suitable proposal for an external funding agency. The proposal outlines your needs and the estimated costs. Usually, written price quotes and product descriptions must be obtained.

Learner Assessment Fee - The Canada Student Grants program covers a portion of the cost of a learning assessment (a maximum of \$1,200 per loan year) if the assessment confirms you have a learning disability. You will need to pay for the assessment up front and be reimbursed later. The assessment may be dated no earlier than six months before you start your studies. A receipt demonstrating that you paid for this service is required.

Information on Assistive Services and Equipment – If you receive funding towards assistive services and equipment, Student Aid Alberta will mail you information about the amount of your grant and its purpose. You must submit receipts for your purchases of assistive services and equipment before the end of your current period of study showing that the funds received were used as intended. Use the Reconciliation Worksheet from Student Aid Alberta (your disability advisor can provide you with one or you can download one from <http://studentaid.alberta.ca> to help you track and reconcile your receipts. You are to write your name and social insurance number on each receipt. Any unused funds must be returned to Student Aid Alberta.

How Can I Make Arrangements for Tests and Exam Accommodations?

General Information

All test and exam accommodations must be approved by Disability Services in a formal manner as outlined in the Columbia College Academic Accommodations Policy. A facilitator cannot informally grant accommodations such as extra time for a test or exam. This would be discrimination against other students. Therefore, students should not ask facilitators for accommodations.

- Test/Exam accommodations vary from student to student. Disability Services may grant a student such accommodations as extended time, use of a computer, adaptive technology, alternate forms of print material, special equipment, use of a scribe, reader, etc.
- Small Group: If a student is to write in a small group, in most cases, the size of the group would be 8-10 students. In special circumstances, the group may be 3 or 4 students.
- Student Conduct Regarding Tests/Exams form: Students, who receive accommodations in tests/exam situations, will be asked to sign a **Student Conduct Regarding Tests/Exams form**. This form represents the student's commitment to a code of conduct of academic honesty regarding cheating, providing information to others, plagiarism, and behaviours that are considered academic dishonesty.
- Time Extensions: A student may receive an accommodation of extra time to write his/her test/exam. It is common to receive time-and-a-half (i.e. 1.5x). For example, for an exam that takes 2 hours, the student would get an accommodation that equals 3 hours. This accommodation, common across North America, is supported by research that shows that students with learning disabilities perform significantly better with the 1.5X extended time accommodation, while their non-learning disabled peers do not perform better given the same accommodation.

Where extended time has been granted, the Disability Services Advisor will consult with the Program Chair or Coordinator as to how this accommodation will be arranged and communicate the plan to the Learning Services Administrator in the library and other stakeholders who are involved in the accommodation delivery.

- Use of Exam Scribe: This should be a rare accommodation. This accommodation may be granted for students with manual or upper body mobility limitations where assistive technology would not be possible. Our goal is to prepare all our students for the work world, and a scribe would not be possible in that environment. Therefore, our first step would be to find ways in which the student can be empowered to be independent and able to cope with their disability limitations.
- Use of Spell/Grammar Check function: A student with a disability may be permitted to use a Spell/Grammar Checker, but this will need to be part of permitted accommodations related to the particular disability. Normally, students do not use Spell/Grammar checkers.
- Use of Electronic Translator: An electronic translator would not be permitted as it is not part of a disability.

- External Special Accommodation – This refers to an accommodation where the student will need to write in a space/time outside of the classroom and/or classroom location.
- Distraction-Free Environment for Tests/Exams – Assessments by medical professionals often recommend an accommodation that has the student take his/her test/exam in a distraction-free environment. A distraction-free environment can be defined as a quiet place where students will not be easily distracted or will not distract others.

Distractions can include people coming into the room, people talking or phones ringing. Visual clutter can also be distracting for some students. Sometimes an assessment suggests a student should read aloud, move around, do relaxation exercises, wear ear plugs, or listen to music or white noise as ways to improve concentration. Therefore, a student could bring in a CD player, iPod and headphones into an exam room. If music is being used, the assessment staff will screen the music prior to exam start. The student would be asked to bring this equipment in two days prior to the exam being taken.

Making Arrangements for Testing Accommodations

1. It is the student's responsibility to manage his/her own accommodated testing arrangements.
2. Fill out a **Request for Testing Accommodations** form (SSC-F004) - available from Administration office, Bldg. 802, your Disability Services Advisor, or Columbia College website and submit it to your facilitator for signature and then forward it to the Assessment Centre staff in the library.
3. The student is responsible for filing out a form each time a test/exam is to be written in the course. For daily tests, this requirement would not apply, but a plan would be put in place by the Disability Services Advisor in collaboration with the Program Chair/designate.
4. There are deadlines to meet. These are:
 - Request for Testing Accommodations must be received a minimum of 5 school days before the test/exam is to be taken. The Learning Services Administrator must have time to secure a location and supervision for you to take this test/exam. Remember that end of semester is a time when all students are writing exams.
 - The facilitator must provide the test/exam to the Learning Services Administrator 3 school days prior to the administration of the test/exam.
5. Accommodations may include writing earlier than the test/exam is to start, writing later, after others complete the test/exam, partly writing outside of the classroom and writing within the classroom. The best possible arrangements will be made by the Learning Services Administrator. Communication would be by email or phone.
6. Students will not be allowed to have cell phones, purses, coats, bags, or any other personal equipment or belongings in the test/exam room. No drinks or food are allowed unless these are part of the accommodations.

7. Students are required to return the test/exam even if they do not wish to have it marked. All papers, scrap paper and such, must be turned in to the Assessment staff.
8. Where a computer is to be used, it will not have Internet access unless it is needed.
9. Students may contact the Assessment Centre at any time by emailing assessment@columbia.ab.ca. or phone (403) 235-9308.

How Do I Arrange for Alternate Format Materials?

The Learning Services Administrator plays an important role in providing this service to students with disabilities.

Print material may need to be converted into alternate formats to help students who, for example, are blind or have low vision or students with certain learning disabilities. Often materials can be submitted electronically by the facilitator and students with assistive technology can work from this format. If this is not suitable, then alternate formatting may take some time to be completed.

Where a student requires e-texts, the Disability Services Advisor will assist the student in requesting that the Learning Services Administrator determine if such formats are available from the publisher.

If a student is blind or has dyslexia, the student can contact Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic (RFB&D) for access to an extensive library of textbooks on tape, as well as, a recording service for new titles. Membership with RFB&D is required to access materials. The student would apply online at www.rfbd.org or telephone at 1-800-RFB-TEXT.

The student is responsible for initiating an alternate format request by filling out a **Request for Alternate Format Materials** form.

The process for requesting Alternate Format Materials is as follows:

1. The student must fill out a Request for Alternate Format Materials form (SSC-F005). This form must be submitted a minimum of 3 weeks prior to start of classes or when required. There is no guarantee that this will be sufficient time to produce materials, as often the College is reliant on other sources to produce the materials.
2. This form is submitted to the Learning Services Administrator who may need to contact such sources as publishers, the Alberta government, CNIB, etc.
3. Other forms of alternate materials may require enlarging materials, creating taped materials, etc. There may be costs involved for these services.
4. The Learning Services Administrator will contact the student and notify them regarding their alternate format request.

Resources

ALIS: Accommodations – Working with Your Disabilities

<http://www.alis.alberta.ca/ep/eps/tips/tips.html?EK=165>

ALIS: What to Say About Your Disability – and When

<http://www.alis.alberta.ca/ep/eps/tips/tips.html?EK=163>

ALIS: Succeeding in the Workplace as a Person With a Disability

<http://www.alis.alberta.ca/ep/eps/tips/tips.html?EK=162>

The Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work – a resource on employment diversity

<http://www.workink.com/>

National Educational Association of Disabled Students

<http://www.neads.ca/en/>

Learning Disabilities Association of Alberta

<http://www.ldaa.ca/>

LD Online

<http://www.ldonline.org/>

Attention Deficit Disorder Association

<http://www.add.org/>

Learning Disabilities Association of Canada

<http://www.ldac-taac.ca/index-e.asp>

Canadian Mental Health Association

<http://www.cmha.ca/youreducation/introduction.html>

Policies/Legislation

Alberta Human Rights Commission (Sept. 2010), Interpretive Bulletin: “Duty to accommodate student with disabilities in post-secondary educational institutions.”

http://www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca./Bull_Duty_to_accom_students.pdf

Alberta Human Rights Act

<http://www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca./about/legislation.asp>

Columbia College Accommodation Policy for Students with Disabilities

Funding

Alberta Employment and Immigration – Disability Related Employment Supports (DRES)

<http://www.employent.alberta.ca/AWonline/ETS/4345.html>

Canada Study Grant

http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/en/goc/accommodation_disabilities.shtml

Student Funding Contact Centre

www.alis.gov.ab.ca

National Student Loans Service Centre

www.canlearn.ca

Learning Strategies

Successful Strategies for Teaching Students with Learning Disabilities

<http://www.ldaamerica.org/aboutld/teaches/understanding/strategies.asp>

For Teachers –Information on teaching students with disabilities

<http://www.ldanatl.org/aboutld/teacher/index.asp>

Learning Strategies for students with Learning Disabilities

<http://www.nichcy.org/pubs/bibliog/bib14txt.htm>

The Learning Toolbox – for teachers, students and parents

<http://coe.jmu.edu/Learningtoolbo/>

Learning Strategies Database

<http://www.muskingum.edu/~cal/database/general/memory.html>

Learning Strategies Handouts

<http://www.cla.purdue.edu/asc/studentssupport/handouts/>

Assistive Technology

Aroga

<http://www.aroga.com/contact.asp>

Columbia College: Students with Disabilities Checklist

When applying to Columbia College:

4-6 months before classes begin:

- Begin the admission process as outlined in the calendar

If you require accommodations to take the Columbia College Assessments, please inform your Admission Advisor prior to having an assessment booked.

- If you have self-identified a disability on the Columbia College application, a Disability Services Advisor will call you. Do not take the Assessment until you have heard from the Disability Services Advisor.
- Register with Disability Services by filling out a registration form.
- Review Columbia College Policy on Students with Disabilities and Handbook for Students with Disabilities located on the Columbia College website or from the Administration Office, Bldg. 802.

Once admission requirements have been met:

- Meet with a Disability Services Advisor to discuss your accommodation requests.
- To your meeting with the Disability Services Advisor, bring documentation of your disability(s) from a qualified professional.
- Participate in the process of discussing reasonable and appropriate accommodations for your program of study.
- Sign Student Waiver Forms so that your Disability Services Advisor can communicate with appropriate personnel to set up your services.
- Review your Accommodation Plan.
- Complete funding application. Wait for funding approval.

Once funding has been approved:

- Make arrangements for accommodations such as tutors, interpreters or other supports before classes begin. Your Disability Services advisor will help and guide you.
- Make arrangements for Alternate Format texts or materials as required. A minimum length of time required is at least one month.
- Make arrangements with accounting for payment of “funded individual services” where applicable.

In the weeks before the start of the semester:

- Attend the College Skills for Success course, and pick up your texts and any other materials. You will only be able to do this if your funding is in place.
- Pick up your copy of the Letter of Accommodation to facilitators from your Disability Services Advisor. (week before classes start). Your Program Chair/Designate, or Coordinator and faculty will have already received the letter.
- Speak to your Program Chair/Designate or Coordinator in order to get assistance in making an appointment with the facilitator/s to discuss your needs. (optional)

Ongoing:

- Meet with the Disability Services Advisor and Program Chair/Designate or Coordinator in the beginning of each semester (pre-career programs) to review the accommodation plan. Students in professional programs should meet at least once during the certificate and once during the diploma program to review the accommodation plan. It is the student's responsibility to initiate these meetings.
- Meet with the Program Chair/Designate, or Coordinator when needed to discuss any program related needs.
- Meet with the Disability Services Advisor to discuss any additional needs or revisions necessary in your current supports.
- Access services and supports available to you.