

Columbia College Student Accommodation Policy

NOTE: Must; Shall; Will: Should: May or Could; Can:	Clarification of Terms These words or phrases indicate actions or activities that are <i>essential</i> or <i>mandatory</i> . This word implies that it is highly desirable to perform certain actions or activities, but not essential or mandatory. These words imply freedom or liberty to follow an alternative to the action or activity being presented in a document.
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INTRODUCTION

The College believes in doing all it can do in supporting all individuals seeking access to education and helping them to participate fully in their educational experience.

In this regard: “We, at Columbia College, welcome, value, celebrate, and respect individuals of all races, ancestry, religious belief, marital status, age, disability, sexual orientation and gender, including gender identity and expression. We are committed to treating all persons with dignity and respect in an honest, open, fair and friendly manner.” (Columbia’s Commitment to Human Rights and Diversity Policy ADM-P029)

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 accommodations is based on shared responsibilities between the student and the College and is determined on an individual basis and in a timely and responsive manner.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to reflect the College’s commitment to providing students with documented disabilities and those requesting accommodations based on Protected Grounds, reasonable supports and accommodations, short of undue hardship. It applies to the provision of accommodation in the institution’s policies including rules, standards, and procedures.

GUIDELINES

This policy document is guided by federal and provincial human rights legislation.

Protected Grounds:

The Alberta Human Rights Act provides Albertans with protection of their human rights. The Act provides protection from discrimination under the following grounds:

Race, religious belief, colour, gender, including pregnancy, gender identity and expression*, physical disability, mental disability, marital status, ancestry, family status, place of origin, age, sexual orientation. *Gender identity and expression is not currently enumerated in the Act. The Human Rights Commission has identified these areas to protect individuals from discrimination.

DEFINITIONS

Accessibility is a general term that refers to the extent to which a student may have access to a learning environment, educational program or course, services, and facilities.

Accommodation is 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 or those who request accommodations based on Protected Grounds is to ensure full participation in all aspects of their educational experience.

Assistive Technology consists of equipment or technology that allows a person to complete a task where otherwise the person might not be able to do so or be limited in their access to the task.

Barrier is any impediment that prevents or impedes a person from accessing a learning environment, educational program or course, service or facility.

Bona fide occupational requirements (BFORs) are reasonable and justifiable requirements that are integral to carrying out the functions of a specific position or occupation. Columbia College makes every effort to work with the student to determine if the student can successfully work in the occupation they have chosen.

Bona fide educational requirements (BFERs) are important admission, program and graduation requirements of a training program. BFERs are essential to maintain the integrity of the course or program, including the requirements for a student to acquire and demonstrate essential skills and knowledge related to course objectives and learning outcomes, and if applicable, any professional licensing requirements. Columbia College makes every effort to work with the student to determine if the student will be able to complete all aspects of their education training program.

Chronic Medical (Health) Condition may be considered a disability if it meets the definition of a permanent disability. A temporary medical (health) condition may be considered for accommodations.

Duty to Accommodate refers to the requirement under federal and provincial legislation to make arrangements, adjustments and alterations in the educational environment to ensure that it does not have a discriminatory effect on a student because of the student's disability.

Fitness to Practice means the physical, mental, and emotional capacity to practice safely in accordance with the student's program and practicum or work experience placement.

Gender consists of being male, female, or transgender. Also protected under gender are pregnancy and sexual harassment. Gender identity and expression have been identified to prevent discrimination in these areas.

Learning Environment is any context that is viewed as an opportunity for education or training. This includes traditional classrooms, labs, clinical settings, tutorials, and online courses.

Letter of Accommodation is a document prepared by Student Accessibility Services and provided to the student and other identified stakeholders that details the Reasonable Accommodations that have been granted by the College. This structures the student's accommodation plan.

Mental Disability consists of mental disorder, developmental disorder or learning disorder regardless of the cause or duration of the disorder.

Physical Disability consists of 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 other remedial appliance or device.

Reasonable Accommodation under provincial legislation and the Supreme Court of Canada, refers to the requirements of educational institutions to provide accommodation up to the point of undue hardship, that is, the provision of accommodation to a standard that overcomes a discriminatory effect, but does not require the institution to choose the most expensive or comprehensive level of accommodation. The determination of reasonable accommodations for an individual may vary between courses, including required off campus components of a program, and/or over time depending upon individual circumstances.

Reduced Course Load refers to a person with disabilities taking a minimum of 40 percent of a full course load. The student would be considered as full-time.

Student refers to an individual who is registered in a course or program at the College.

Transitory Illness may be considered to be a disability if it is chronic, recurring, impacts a person's ability to carry out life's functions. It is a temporary condition.

Undue Hardship refers to unreasonable or excessive challenge for the institution. Tests for what may be considered "reasonable and justifiable" and what may constitute "undue hardship" are available in the *Interpretive Bulletin for Duty to Accommodate Students with Disabilities in a post-secondary institution*. This document is located on the Alberta Human Rights website.

Universal Design refers to principles that govern the creation of an educational environment that takes into account the needs of students with the widest possible range of abilities in the widest range of situations. This refers to course curriculum, delivery methods, evaluation, methodologies, classroom design and such.

COLLEGE'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Within the limits set out in the policy statement, and in a timely manner, the College will be expected to:

1. Maintain an organization-wide policy that reflects current trends in accommodation.
2. Provide students with access to information on accommodations.
3. Accommodate students up to the point of undue hardship. There is no duty to provide instant or perfect accommodation.
4. Where necessary, and without compromising its academic standards, the College may modify aspects of program course load, assignments, testing and exam procedures, and other requirements to assist students requesting accommodations based on disabilities and Protected Grounds to complete their programs. In evaluating any special circumstances which require this type of modifications, consultation will take place between Student Accessibility Services and the program department. Other stakeholders may also need to be consulted (e.g. Accreditation, professional bodies).
5. If a student reveals a need for accommodation after being enrolled in a program or after the program has begun, the College will provide those accommodations that are granted once the process for accommodations has been completed, and all arrangements for accommodations have been made. If accommodations are dependent on funding or referral to other services, accommodations will take place once this part of the process is complete.

6. Review supporting documentation and recommendation and/or requests for accommodation and/or supports in a timely manner.
7. Use a consultative process between the student and the Accessibility Services Advisor, and where necessary, the appropriate academic personnel, and other professional sources, in order to determine the appropriate reasonable accommodations.
8. Provide the student with a response in writing as to the request for accommodation, normally within 15 school operating days or as is timely and appropriate in regard to the start of the student's program. Response time may vary if there is a lengthy period of time to the start of the program and/or there is a need to secure external advice or information.
9. Inform the student how to appeal the denial of a request for accommodation.
10. As possible, inform the student seeking accommodation about potential issues they may face when applying for professional license. This does not replace having the student contact the Licensing or professional body to ensure that they understand the position of the organization regarding their individual situation. The College may also choose to contact the Licensing or professional body for further clarification or information.
11. Consider BFORs and BFERs, and Fitness to Practice with regard to all students seeking admission, currently enrolled or seeking a practicum or work experience. Students may be asked to have a health assessment and a Columbia College Health Information Form filled out by their doctor to ensure Fitness to Practice. Any costs related to this request are the responsibility of the student.
12. Develop a written accommodation plan outlining the approved accommodations and supports based on collaboration with the student and the program representative. With the student's permission, faculty and staff who are integral to the process may be involved in the creation of the accommodation plan. The plan will be outlined in the Accommodation Letter. Any information that does not affect the delivery of courses or programs will be kept confidential and will not appear in the Accommodation Letter.
13. Assist in preparing an application for funding to cover costs of accommodation and/or supports. Refer the student to funding agencies as appropriate.
14. Notify the student of any fees for services.
15. With the student's informed consent, communicate necessary information regarding the accommodation and/or support required with stakeholders.
16. Upon request by the student, review the accommodation plan with the student within the first few weeks of classes and as needed throughout the program.
17. Collaborate with all stakeholders regarding accommodations and services, provide advice and support to faculty and other staff about how to provide accommodations.
18. Document the process of accommodation throughout the student's program at the institution.
19. Keep the details of the student's reason for accommodations confidential. Program representatives, faculty, and Admissions will be provided with an Accommodation Letter describing the accommodation granted by the College. The diagnosis or reason for accommodation will not be stated. A copy of the letter will be provided to the student. The Accommodation Plan will be outlined in this letter. Stakeholders will keep all information about the student and accommodations confidential.

20. Keep all records confidential. All documents (medical information, etc.) will be placed in a separate file from the student's regular file and stored by the Student Accessibility Department. A copy of the Accommodation Letter is stored in the student's regular file.
21. Provide staff and faculty with disability and human rights awareness training, information about the duty to accommodate students with disabilities, and services available to students, faculty and staff.
22. Promote student self-advocacy.
23. Consider and implement Universal Design principles in all facilities as possible.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Students with disabilities who are seeking accommodations or supports will be expected to:

1. Meet all admission requirements of the program to which they have applied.
2. Review all information provided by Columbia College as found on the College's website under Accessibility Services. This includes Columbia College's Student Accommodation Policy and Student Guide to Accessibility Services.
3. Disclose the disability and/or Protected Ground, and request accommodations as early as possible in the admission process. The Columbia College application provides an opportunity to self-identify at the point of application. When the student chooses to reveal a disability and/or Protected Ground, the student is not required to reveal the specific details of the disability to anyone other than the Accessibility Advisor.
4. Register with Student Accessibility Services by filling out an Accessibility Services Registration/Consent for Services form. Sign necessary information release forms.
5. Provide as much lead time as possible to arrange accommodations, as it may take several months to arrange accommodations, specialized technology and services prior to starting classes. Approximately, four to six months' notice is recommended.
6. Understand that a fee for service may be necessary.
7. When a fee for service is necessary, the student will pay all fees in a timely manner according to the policies and procedures established by the College.
8. Apply for provincial and federal grants to defray costs of services or have the financial resources to pay for services.
9. Work collaboratively with the Accessibility Services Advisor and other stakeholders to create a written accommodation plan. Provide any requested documents in a timely manner.
10. Report any changes in the student's condition or circumstances to their Accessibility Advisor and program representative as appropriate.
11. Demonstrate appropriate use of necessary accommodations and supports to ensure academic success.
12. Attend appointments with the Accessibility Services Advisor and other stakeholders to review the success of the accommodations as needed. Request timely assistance if there are difficulties with the accommodation plan/support.
13. Where advisable, contact the Licensing or professional body to secure information regarding their situation.
14. Keep a written record of the accommodation procedure for the student's own records.

15. Demonstrate and practice appropriate self-advocacy.

STUDENTS REQUESTING ACCOMMODATION

Students requesting accommodation should be prepared to:

- Identify the disability and/or Protected Ground that the accommodated is based on;
- Provide acceptable supporting documentation;
- Meet all Bona Fide Educational Requirements;
- Participate constructively and in a timely manner in the process of determining Reasonable Accommodation;
- Participate in any requests by the College to take part in activities such as Student for a Day or other such requests that will assist the student and the College to determine Reasonable Accommodation needs.

DENIAL OF ACCOMMODATION

A request for accommodation may only be denied in case of Undue Hardship. In determining whether or not there is Undue Hardship, the College may consider, among other things:

- Health and Safety concerns, including Fitness to Practice;
- Financial cost to the College as a whole (not to the program or department);
- Significance of disruption to the operations of the College and/or the program;
- Substantial interference with the rights of other individuals or groups;
- Bona Fide Educational Requirements; Bona Fide Occupational Requirements.

DOCUMENTATION OF A DISABILITY

1. Documentation in support of a request for accommodation must meet the requirements as indicated in Appendix A or as stated in #2 below.
2. A student may provide an official document stating that they are in receipt of federal and/or provincial disability assistance, for example, Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH).
3. New or updated information may be requested when a new or returning student's functional abilities have shown significant change or when the accommodation requests have changed significantly over the course of studies.
4. A high school Individualized Program Plan (IPP) may be presented as documentation if the document answers the needs for accommodations. If funding through Student Loans is required, this document cannot be used. It is at the discretion of the College as to the acceptance of an IPP for documentation.
5. All information obtained by the College will be treated as confidential and according to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act and according to the Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA). Personal documentation will be destroyed consistent with the institution's Records Management Policy.

6. A student who will be writing a national accreditation exam will need to provide documentation of disability to that organization in order to be granted accommodations. It is the student's responsibility to determine what documentation may be required.

DECISIONS REGARDING RECOMMENDED ACCOMMODATIONS

1. Students wishing to appeal matters pertaining to this policy are referred to the Columbia College Student Appeals policy (ADM-P177).
2. If a facilitator does not agree with the accommodations required, they will communicate this difference to their Program Representative who will consult with the Student Accessibility Services Advisor on the matter. If a resolution cannot be reached, the Employee and Student Grievance Policy will be followed.

ACCOMMODATIONS IN PRACTICUM AND WORKPLACE PLACEMENTS

Columbia College is responsible for facilitating accommodations in practicum and work experience placements. However, both the College and the practicum or work experience provider share the responsibility of finding a reasonable accommodation.

The College is responsible for determining Fitness to Practice as required by some programs. The student is responsible for any costs related to this requirement.

REFERENCES

Alberta Human Rights Commission (Sept. 2010), Interpretive Bulletin: "Duty to accommodate student with disabilities in post-secondary education." - Alberta Human Rights website www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca

Alberta Human Rights Act – Alberta Human Rights website

RELATED COLUMBIA COLLEGE POLICIES

- ADM-P151 – Attendance Policy and Regulations
- ADM P079 – Columbia College Commitment to Human Rights & Diversity Policy
- ADM-P014 – Document Control Policy & Procedures
- ADM-P177 – Student Appeals Policy & Procedures
- ADM-P229 - Student Code of Conduct
- ADM-F030 – Student Roles and Responsibilities

Other:

- SSCM-001 - Student Guide to Accessibility Services

APPENDIX A – REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION AS PROOF OF PERMANENT DISABILITY AND/OR MEDICAL (HEALTH) CONDITION

Student Responsibility for Documentation

It is the responsibility of the student to provide a comprehensive evaluation that verifies the diagnosis. Documentation must be current (within the last three years). In some cases, students may bring documentation that is more dated. This may be used if a student does not plan to apply for a student loan.

INFORMATION FOR STUDENT REQUESTING DOCUMENTATION OF DISABILITY AND/OR MEDICAL (HEALTH) CONDITION FROM MEDICAL PRACTITIONER

A student requesting a document from a medical professional may find it useful to show the following documentation:

Assessment Documentation:

This documentation should contain the following:

- Health Professional's name, title, phone number, address, and signature for verification
- A clear statement of the disability, including summary of present functioning and limitations.
- Date(s) of assessment.
- Information on assessment procedures and evaluation instruments used to make the diagnosis and assessment results, including standardized or percentile scores.
- Explain the impact of the disability or medical (health) condition on the student in a post-secondary learning environment. This includes the impact of medication.
- Specific recommendations for strategies, academic accommodations, assistive technology and other supports needed.

Summary of Disability Documentation Required

Type of Disability	Documentation Required
Deaf, Hearing Impaired	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Audiologist report, or• Letter from physician with an explanation of the degree of hearing loss
Blind, Visually Impaired	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Specialist report, or• Letter from a physician with a description of the functional limitations
Learning Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Psycho-educational report from a psychologist, or

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neuro-psychological report
Speech	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech language pathologist report
Mobility/Agility Impairment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist report, or • Letter from a physician with an explanation of the nature of the mobility/agility impairment (functional limitation)
ADD/ADHD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychologist report, or • Neuro-psychological report, or • Letter from a psychiatrist, or • Letter from a physician with details about the diagnosis
Psychiatric or Psychological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychologist report with DSM diagnosis, or • Letter from a psychiatrist with a DSM diagnosis, or • Letter from a physician with details about the diagnosis including the DSM
Autism, Asperger, Rett	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychological report, or • Letter from a physician with details about the diagnosis
Brain Injury/Cognitive Impairment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neuro-psychological report, or • Brain injury/cognitive impairment report/assessment
Other Permanent Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chronic Fatigue: a detailed letter from physician • Irlen Syndrome: assessment report from a certified Irlen Screener

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION FOR STUDENTS WITH TRANSITORY (TEMPORARY) ILLNESS

It is the responsibility of the student to provide proof of the transitory (temporary or recurring) illness from their doctor. This could be information on a doctor's note pad, a prescription from a pharmacy that outlines side effects of medication and other useful information.