

 <p>Confederation COLLEGE</p> <p>OPERATING PRACTICE</p>	Number: 5-4-07	
	Originator:	Vice President Academic & Student Services
	Approved By:	DRAFT PENDING APPROVAL
	Effective Date:	
	Replaces:	NEW
STUDENT ACCOMMODATION PRACTICES		

Purpose

- 1.1 These practices define the responsibilities of students, faculty, administration, and the Learning Centre in ensuring that programs at Confederation College are accessible to students with disabilities and that students with disabilities have equal opportunity for educational success.

2 Terms of Reference

- 2.1 The College accepts that education is defined as a "service" under the Human Rights Code Ontario (Section 1) which states that "Every person has the right to equal treatment with respect to services, goods and facilities, without discrimination because of...disability." The College, therefore, recognizes its obligation to provide reasonable academic accommodation to students with disabilities where the accommodation can be implemented without compromising the academic integrity of the course or program. Also, needs will be accommodated providing these accommodations do not impose undue hardship on the College, considering cost and/or health and safety standards.
- 2.2 All part-time and full-time Confederation College students fall under the scope of these practices, including the following: postsecondary, upgrading, general interest, apprenticeship training.
- 2.3 A number of students who present with learning difficulties do not have a disability. For example, some students experience problems mastering postsecondary subject material due to English as a Second Language, gaps in background education, test anxiety or fear of public speaking, weak study habits, poor time management skills, or the pressure of extenuating personal circumstances. Students who do not qualify for disability services are referred to appropriate internal/external support.
- 2.4 All students must demonstrate standard competencies for successful course completion. Accommodations put in place for students with disabilities cannot guarantee success.
- 2.5 The most significant aspect of these practices is the recognition that provision of services for students with disabilities is a shared responsibility among students, faculty, administration, and the Learning Centre. This relationship is based on respect of individual rights and the dignity of the individual, and the College community's shared commitment to an open, supportive learning environment.
- 2.6 In this context, "disability" refers to any condition, physical or psychological (as defined by the Ontario Human Rights Code), which limits the opportunities of a person to meet the essential requirements of a course or program. Such conditions may include, but are not limited to: attention deficit disorder, blind or low vision, brain injury, deaf or hard of hearing, developmental disability, learning disability, medical condition, mental illness, or mobility limitation.

3 Admissions

- 3.1 All individuals with disabilities are expected to satisfy the normal requirements for admission to programs as published by Confederation College. With appropriate documentation, reasonable accommodations to the admission's procedure may be provided when requested.

- 3.2 Disclosure of a special need cannot be used to discriminate against an individual. As well, probability of success in the occupation cannot be used in determining admission to a program. However, pre-admission career counseling through the Learning Centre is recommended to encourage potential students to make informed and reasonable program choices.

4 Student Responsibilities

- 4.1 Students are encouraged to identify themselves to the Learning Centre as soon as possible by making an appointment with the Counsellor for Students with Disabilities. An ideal time is before program registration. The Counsellor will assist individuals in choosing a program or subjects which are consistent with their abilities, interests, and career goals.
- 4.2 Once students with disabilities have been accepted into a program, early identification is required in order to ensure the greatest opportunity for success. Due to limited resources, the Learning Centre cannot guarantee delivery of accommodations without adequate preparation time. Students may need to check course requirements with faculty or the program coordinator. If students suspect a course may pose a difficulty because of their disability, they should explore options before the start of the semester. Students are responsible for ensuring that their disability won't prevent them from completing the academic requirements of their program or limit their employment opportunities.
- 4.3 To receive accommodation for a disability, students are required to provide the Learning Centre with recent documentation—a medical, educational, or psycho-educational verification of the disability by a qualified medical practitioner or registered psychologist. The documentation should outline the nature of the disability, along with a detailed explanation of the functional impact of the disability on the pursuit of postsecondary education. When possible, the documentation should give explicit recommendations for remedial and/or coping strategies that will minimize the impact of the disability and assist individuals in reaching their true potential. A diagnosis alone (e.g. "visually impaired," "hearing impaired," or "learning disability") is not sufficient information for determining the most effective accommodation for each student's unique needs. Documentation of a disability is kept confidential in compliance with standards established in the Student Information Release policy and in accordance with FIPPA and PHIPA standards. It is used to develop an appropriate Individual Education Plan (IEP).
- 4.4 It is in the student's best interest to provide relevant medical documentation to Health Services so that information is on file should medical services be required.
- 4.5 It is important for students to discuss their needs with Learning Centre staff and learn about the services available. Once eligibility for services is determined, students assist the Counsellor in developing an IEP identifying individual needs to faculty and program chairs/coordinators.
- 4.6 Students studying at a location other than the Thunder Bay Campus submit their documentation to the Special Needs Counsellor in the Learning Centre at the Thunder Bay Campus. They communicate with the Special Needs Counsellor by telephone or in person, in order to have accommodations put into place.
- 4.7 Students studying at a campus other than the Thunder Bay Campus can access telephone and fax services at the area campuses by contacting area campus personnel. Students should also contact the area campus manager when encountering any programs in accessing disability-related services.
- 4.8 Students must promptly initiate communication with each faculty regarding need for classroom accommodations as verified by documentation. This initial meeting gives faculty an opportunity to learn about each student's particular needs, clarify student responsibilities and course requirements, discuss any concerns, and offer assistance. It is important that student and faculty agree early in the term to alternative forms of testing and evaluation, including class participation marks, if they are part of the accommodation on the IEP. In cases of difficulty reaching a mutual agreement with faculty regarding accommodations, students should ask for assistance from Learning Centre staff.
- 4.9 Students need to make appointments and complete requirements, such as filling out and bringing in application forms, to access the Learning Centre's support and meet to evaluate effectiveness of accommodations. It is the student's responsibility to request and complete procedures for accommodations as required and inform the Learning Centre of any changes required or difficulties encountered.

- 4.10 At the beginning of each academic semester, students are required to bring their timetable with faculty names to the Learning Centre to renew their IEP so that new faculty are aware of their needs. Area Campus students can contact the Learning Centre by telephone through the campus office.
- 4.11 Even if students feel they will not require accommodations, it is strongly recommended that they register at the Learning Centre so documentation is in place should they require disabilities service at a later date.
- 4.12 Accommodations are not intended to be a guarantee of success. Students must demonstrate standard competencies for successful course completion.

5 Learning Centre Responsibilities

- 5.1 The Learning Centre is responsible for ensuring that reasonable services and accommodations, supported by appropriate documentation, are put in place and communicated to the various College staff who are involved in their provision.
- 5.2 The Learning Centre provides disability-related information to the College community, coordinates awareness activities, promotes advocacy, and ensures the provision of support services and accommodations for qualifying students.
- 5.3 Students with disabilities are required to provide current documentation of their disability as it pertains to education. The Learning Centre, while maintaining confidentiality, reviews all documentation to ensure its validity. If there is insufficient documentation, the Learning Centre may recommend and/or arrange for further assessment or obtain existing documentation as advised by the student.
- 5.4 At individual intake interviews with Learning Centre staff, students discuss their needs and learn about the services available. Once eligibility for services is established, the Learning Centre staff, in consultation with the student, determines reasonable accommodations and develops an IEP, identifying student needs to faculty and the program chair or coordinator. Providing these accommodations helps minimize the impact on the student's disability and assists students in reaching their true potential. However, accommodations are not intended to be a guarantee of academic success. Students with disabilities need to demonstrate standard program competencies for successful course completion.
- 5.5 According to the Ontario Human Rights Code (Section 17(2)), an accommodation is considered to be a reasonable accommodation unless providing the accommodation would pose undue hardship on the person responsible for accommodating those circumstances.
- 5.6 Accommodation is not reasonable if it imposes undue hardship. Undue hardship must be demonstrated objectively by considering the cost, outside sources of funding (if any), and health and safety requirements (if any). The effectiveness of the accommodation is reviewed throughout the semester at the request of the student, faculty, or the Learning Centre staff to ensure continued appropriateness of the accommodation.

6 Faculty Responsibilities

- 6.1 Once students with disabilities are admitted to a program, faculty are expected to comply with the students' requests for those course accommodations and services that are substantiated by the Learning Centre. All services and accommodations are provided on an individual basis and supported by relevant documentation held in the Learning Centre. These accommodations and services are detailed in an IEP, which is prepared by the Learning Centre and sent to the student's faculty.
- 6.2 When faculty are asked by students for accommodations for a disability and an IEP is not in place for the student, or the IEP does not include the particular accommodation requested, faculty should refer the student to the Learning Centre.
- 6.3 By making a general announcement in class, faculty can advise all students of disability services at the Learning Centre and encourage students with disabilities to identify themselves to the Learning Centre so that their needs can be met. Faculty should refer any student with a suspected disability to the Learning Centre in a way that protects the confidentiality of the student.
- 6.4 When approached by a student with a confirmed or suspected disability, faculty should respond with sensitivity, discretion, and confidentiality. Meeting with a student with a disability gives faculty an opportunity to learn about the student's particular needs, inform the student of responsibilities and course requirements,

discuss any concerns, and offer assistance. It is essential for the student and faculty to agree early in the term to alternative forms of testing and evaluation, including class participation marks, when these aspects of the course are listed as a classroom accommodation on the IEP.

- 6.5 When faculty require the assistance of the Learning Centre in providing test accommodation, they are to complete a section of the *Test Accommodation Form* and return it, along with a copy of the test, to the Learning Centre. Tests are to be delivered to the Learning Centre and picked up on completion by faculty. Tests are not to be sent or returned by mail.
- 6.6 Faculty should consult with the Learning Centre if they have concerns regarding any of the information listed on the IEP.

7 Administration

- 7.1 Confederation College is committed to providing a learning environment that is accessible to people with disabilities while respecting individual rights to dignity and promoting positive self-concept. This can be achieved only through direct assistance to students, encouragement of independence, and the maintenance of an accessible and supportive environment.
- 7.2 The College's Administration must be aware of the significant resource implications when providing services for students with disabilities. The College must address and be prepared to meet, where necessary, the economic demands that the accommodation of students with disabilities may require.
- 7.3 The College Administration is expected to promote activities that heighten awareness and challenge attitudes that create barriers for students with disabilities. It is the Administration's responsibility to ensure that faculty, staff, and students are aware of the services the College offers students with disabilities, as well as the students' rights and obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code.