



**Purpose:** Portage College encourages qualified individuals with disabilities to seek admission to its programs and courses. Within the limits of college resources and with due regard for the rights and entitlements of other students and college staff who may be affected, Portage College will provide students with disabilities with services and accessible facilities to enable them to participate in programs and courses.

The College's goal is to ensure the fair treatment of all students in accordance with their distinct needs but without compromising academic standards and principles.

The College has the duty to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities and will endeavour to provide a supportive physical, academic and social environment. The College will provide accommodations to students with documented disabilities to ensure equal access to education in accordance with the Alberta Human Rights Citizenship and Multicultural Act, and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, to the extent that the accommodation does not cause undue hardship to the College or lower the performance and academic standards of its programs.

This guideline clarifies the rights and responsibilities of Portage College, its staff and students with respect to accommodations for students with disabilities.

**Responsibility:** Vice President, Academic and Research, Vice President, Student and College Services

**Definitions:**

Disability: is defined as a physical or mental condition or impairment that is medically cognizable, diagnosable, and substantially limits one or more of a person's major life activities. These limitations may include, but are not limited to: caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, working, and learning. See: Alberta Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act, Section 44.

Accommodation: Accommodation is the process of making adjustments or alternative arrangements to the delivery of College services so that those services become accessible to people with disabilities.

Accommodations are intended to support the academic capabilities of the student and remove barriers to the student's success. Accommodation does not require the College to lower standards nor does it relieve the student of the responsibility to develop the essential competencies required by program areas. See: Alberta Human Rights Duty to Accommodate Students with Disabilities in Post-Secondary Institutions, interpretive bulletin, August, 2004, pp.2-5.

Duty to Accommodate: Federal and provincial legislation to guide educational institutions to ensure that students are not discriminated against due to their disabilities.

Student with a Disability: A student with a disability is one who has been identified by a qualified professional through a documented process (documented generally within the last 3 years). Documentation should outline the nature of the disability, the impact of the disability on performance while enrolled in a program, and suggested/recommended accommodations.

Student Learning Services (SLS): The department responsible for the coordination of reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities at Portage College.

**Guidelines:**

**The College will:**

1. Ensure that individuals with disabilities are equally considered for admission to programs for which they meet the admission requirements and ensure that admission requirements do not discriminate against academically qualified individuals. It is the College's responsibility to demonstrate that its requirements and standards are necessary for the program.



2. Provide reasonable admissions accommodation to those identified as a student with a disability.
3. Make its programs and services accessible to students with disabilities in accordance with legislation.
4. Provide a process to review the accommodation(s) identified in documentation and, along with the student, develop an accommodation plan.
5. Provide reasonable accommodations to students. "Reasonable" means (1) the accommodations are compatible with the academic standards, individual course objectives and with health and safety standards of Portage College and with the accrediting/licensing bodies for specific occupations; (2) the accommodations must be sensible and workable; and (3) the accommodations must not create excessive cost, nor cause excessive disruption or interference with College operations and the learning of other students.
6. Within its resource constraints, provide the following services to students with disabilities:
  - counseling (educational, career, short-term personal counseling);
  - referral to other agencies or institutions;
  - information and assistance in accessing financial assistance;
  - program planning and advising; and
  - provision of educational support services through the Student Learning Services (SLS) may include: educational remediation, awareness, assessments, academic strategy instruction, exam accommodation(s), note-taking, interpreter services, alternate format material preparation, transcription, self advocacy training, tutoring, assistive technologies, and Woodcock Johnson IV Achievement/Cognitive Assessment.

**The student will:**

1. Disclose the need for accommodation to Student Learning Services; it is the responsibility of the student to contact Student Learning Services. Students are required to fill out a consent for services or decline services form at Student Learning Services. (see Appendix A–SLS consent/decline Services Form).
2. Provide relevant and current (generally within 3 years) documentation to the College, outlining the nature of the disability, the impact on performance while enrolled in a program, and suggested/recommended accommodations. In most cases, the student will have to provide documentation from a qualified expert in the area of the specific disability.
3. Submit all documentation of disabilities to the College in a timely manner to allow for the arrangement of accommodations.

Where disabilities are identified after enrollment and during the course of the student's studies, Portage College will attempt to make reasonable accommodation(s). However, Portage College may not be able to provide any or all appropriate accommodation(s) without prior notice, preparation and planning.

4. Think about and research accommodation requests, openly discuss the accommodations required and potential alternatives with College staff and assist, where appropriate, in requests for additional funding.

Assist College staff in formulating the specific accommodation plans and procedures required.

5. Discuss with each instructor and the program coordinator the accommodations, and on an ongoing basis, monitor the effectiveness of accommodations with the instructors.
6. Follow the specific procedures and instructions for each accommodation.

**Student Appeals:**



A student with a disability may appeal decisions regarding their (1) admission to a College program; (2) the accommodation(s) within their program of studies; and/or (3) the denial of accommodations. An appeal will follow the provisions of the guideline C.4.02 Academic Misconduct/Discipline/Appeals.

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**Procedures:**

These procedures provide a general guide to the management of accommodating students with disabilities, recognizing that students with disabilities do not form a single, homogeneous group. The procedures may need to be modified on a case-by-case basis, along with the accommodation plans.

Students need to recognize that they will most likely need to disclose personal and/or confidential information about their disability with the College staff who will be planning or implementing accommodations. Information released to the College will be used to secure appropriate accommodations and to help ensure the student's needs are met.

College staff will recognize the right of the student to confidentiality (see Appendix A - Consent for Sharing of Confidential Information). Staff will only include other parties integral to the process and will involve them only with the written permission of the student.

1. Students will inform the College of their disabilities if they want accommodations. Normally, the student will identify this need at the time of application. The student must provide the current documentation of an expert in the area of the disability.
2. Admissions: College Student Advisors will assist the student with a disability in the application process. Advisors will inform the student of the process and will serve as a link into the College so that accommodation requirements are identified. Advisors will refer students with disabilities to Program Coordinators Student Learning Services and any other College services, as they deem appropriate to assist the student. (see Appendix C- Student Learning Services Screening Form )
3. Programs: If the program coordinator or instructor notices a student struggling with classwork, he or she may make a referral to Student Learning Services. Students have a choice to consent to services or decline services by signing the referral form with the program coordinator. (see Appendix D- Program Referral Form for SLS)
4. Student Learning Services (SLS): Students referred to SLS will do an initial interview and intake assessment with a Learning Facilitator. If students have documentation, this will be used to determine an accommodation plan. An accommodation plan, called the "Individual Educational Plan" (see Appendix B – Individual Educational Plan), will be developed involving the student, Learning Facilitator, the Program Coordinator, Instructors, and the Student Learning Services Supervisor. Other resource people may also be included, recognizing the need to respect confidentiality. Students must provide written permission to involve other parties.

If students require further documentation, Student Learning Services will use assessment tools to determine referral sources. While waiting for proper documentation some students may be eligible for interim accommodations. These will be determined based on assessments made by SLS. Interim accommodations are temporary accommodations given to students while they wait for appropriate documentation. In order for students to get accommodations they must have documentation from an expert in the area of their disability.



5. The student, instructors, program coordinators and SLS staff are responsible for ensuring the Individual Educational Plan (IEP) is met and appropriate supports are provided. SLS staff and the student will review the IEP at least once and at about the mid-point of the academic year.
  
6. Student Case Conference Protocol: Case Conference Protocol is generally used to manage student cases where the student requires multiple touch points or College areas. Case Conference Protocol may be used to manage special circumstance cases where ongoing strategies are required such as students using multiple services where a coordinated effort is required by the College. The protocol operates in parallel with the policies and procedures of the College. Other agency officials, with the consent of the student, may be called upon to attend meetings (in person or via telephone conference) in relation to specific issues requiring their attendance and/or expertise.
  
7. A Coordinator/Learning Facilitator/Advisor/Instructor may identify a student who requires multiple touch points. The Supervisor of Student Learning Services should be contacted. The initial information will be reviewed to determine if a case conference is required. With the consent of the student, the Supervisor of Student Learning Services will determine who should be invited to attend the case conference and coordinate a time and place for the meeting. The goal of the case conference is to determine a plan for student success and to coordinate additional resources as required.

Recommended by Academic Council

March 15, 2017  
Date

Approved by Executive Committee

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President

March 21, 2017  
Approved Date

March 21, 2017  
Effective Date