

**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 the students with respect to accommodations for students with disabilities.

Responsibility: Vice President – Academic; Registrar

Guidelines:**Definitions:**

Disability: A disability is caused by a mental, physical or sensory impairment, or a combination that may result in a permanent or temporary loss of ability to function in major areas of life activities, such as self-care, receptive or expressive language, learning, mobility, and self-direction (World Health Organization, 1985). Students with disabilities may include, but are not limited to, those with physical disability, vision or hearing loss, learning disability, psychological disorder, chronic illness or temporary disability.

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 expected of all students.

Student with a Disability: A student with a disability is one who has been identified by a qualified professional through a documented process (documented 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.

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 Learning Assistance Centre may include: educational remediation, awareness, academic strategy instruction, exam accommodation(s), note-taking, interpreter services, alternate format material preparation, transcription, self advocacy training, tutoring, and assistive technologies.

The student will:

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. Discuss with each instructor and the program coordinator the accommodations, and on an ongoing basis, monitor the effectiveness of accommodations with the instructors.

5. 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.



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 – C.2.07 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. 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, the Learning Assistance Centre and any other College services, as they deem appropriate to assist the student.
3. An accommodation plan, called the "Individual Educational Plan" (see Appendix B – Individual Educational Plan), will be developed through a meeting with the student, student advisor, the program coordinator, instructors, and the Learning Assistance Centre coordinator. Other resource people may also be included, recognizing the need to respect confidentiality concerns. The student must provide written permission to involve other parties.
4. The student, instructors, program coordinators and LAC staff are responsible for ensuring the Individual Educational Plan (IEP) is met and appropriate supports are provided. The College staff and the student will review the IEP at least once and at about the mid-point of the academic year.

Recommended by Academic Council

March 16, 2005
Date

Approved by Executive Committee

President

April 5, 2005
Approved Date

April 5, 2005
Effective Date