

POLICY TITLE: Accessible Learning Services Policy

POLICY CATEGORY: ACADEMIC

POLICY NUMBER: A004

POLICY OWNER: Associate Vice President, Student Success

POLICY APPROVER: Board of Governors

APPROVAL DATE: 2010 (originally as 'Disability Services Policy'; last reviewed December 14, 2018)

EFFECTIVE DATE: 2010

REVIEW PERIOD: Every 5 Years

REVIEWED: October 15, 2025

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1. Purpose

George Brown College believes and acknowledges that:

- it should foster a climate of inclusion as a means of honouring the dignity of individuals with disabilities.
- it is committed to accessibility and providing students with equitable access to education.
- it is dedicated to establishing an inclusive learning environment that supports the varied needs and abilities of all students, thereby minimizing barriers associated with disabilities.

This policy helps fulfil these beliefs and guides in the provision of reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities.

This policy follows the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities (AODA) legislation. This policy supports the proactive creation of an inclusive post-secondary environment at the college which includes creating a safe, supportive, and respectful environment, so all students can realize their full potential within George Brown College's learning environment.

2. Scope

This policy applies to students and applicants seeking or receiving Accessible Learning Services (ALS), as they participate in George Brown College programs and services. This

includes applicants applying to programs with admission testing requirements, prospective students who have not yet registered in courses, but need to complete placement testing requirements and current students who are enrolled in any full time, part time and/or Continuing Education programs associated with George Brown College. This policy also applies to George Brown College employees, contractors, volunteers and anyone involved in providing or supporting the student accommodations process.

3. Definition of Terms

This section includes an explanation of terms and abbreviations used within this document.

Word/Term	Definition
Accessible Learning Services (ALS)	Refers to the Accessible Learning Services department, which includes the previously named “Disability Services.”
Academic accommodations	Academic accommodations are educational practices, systems and support services designed to accommodate functional limitations due to a disability. All parties share in the responsibility to accommodate students.
Disability	As defined by the Ontario Human Rights Code, Section 10(1): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,</i> • <i>a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,</i> • <i>a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,</i> • <i>a mental disorder,</i> • <i>or an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997</i>
Duty to Inquire	A legal obligation that requires individuals or institutions—such as employers, educators, or service providers—to <i>proactively</i> explore whether someone may need accommodations due to a

	disability, especially when there are signs of a potential disability impacting their performance or behavior.
Learning Outcomes	Of a course/program may include, but are not limited to, the knowledge and skills which must be acquired and/or demonstrated in order for a student to successfully meet the learning objectives of a course/program.
Office of Anti-Racism, Equity and Human Rights Services (OAREHRS)	Refers to the Office of Anti-Racism, Equity and Human Rights Services department.
Reasonable Accommodations	Are accommodations to the academic requirements of a program that do not compromise course learning outcomes or academic standards, which provide an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to obtain the same benefit as those available to an individual without a disability.
Retroactive accommodations	Accommodations for permanent or temporary disabilities are considered retroactive when the request is made after the fact, as the result of a barrier that prevented a student from communicating their need for accommodation.
Self-identification process	Occurs when a student voluntarily identifies their functional impacts of disability or disabilities to ALS staff. Self-identification is confidential and the release of personal information is subject to applicable privacy legislation.
Undue hardship	Means the outer limit of the accommodation obligation. This refers to three factors for consideration prescribed by the Ontario Human Rights Code. These factors are: 1) cost; 2) availability of outside resources or funding; and 3) health and safety requirements. Undue hardship must be considered individually, in the full context in which each request for accommodation arises.
Universal Design for Learning (UDL)	Is an educational framework that aims to make learning accessible and inclusive for all students by providing multiple ways to engage, represent, and express knowledge.
Work Integrated Learning (WIL)	Is a model and process of curricular experiential education, which formally and intentionally integrates a student's academic studies within a workplace or practice setting.

4. Policy

1.0 Background

George Brown College commits to creating an inclusive academic environment that is guided by the following principles and in accordance with Federal and Provincial legislation related to accessibility:

2.0 Principles

2.1 Dignity: George Brown College will respect the dignity of students with disabilities, encourage the principles of universal design for learning in the teaching and learning environment, and take into consideration the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005) and the Ontario Human Rights Commission: Accessible Education for Students with Disabilities policy (2018).

2.2 Inclusion: Programs and services are designed and implemented for all students. Inclusivity in design and delivery requires all parties (students, faculty, Accessible Learning Service, relevant administrators) to recognize the diverse abilities of students and to engage in meaningful dialogue when designing and implementing programs, services, and learning environments. George Brown College recognizes that each student's needs are unique, and these needs may require different approaches to ensure full participation in the educational environment.

2.3 Confidentiality: George Brown College will respect the privacy of all persons concerning self-disclosed information in accordance with the College's guidelines on Secure Handling of Confidential Information and ALS's Consent to Service, which includes a confidentiality agreement.

2.4 Duty to Accommodate: George Brown College has a duty to accommodate students with disabilities as stated by the Ontario Human Rights Code. The duty to accommodate requires faculty and staff to accommodate known or reasonably foreseeable disability needs.

Some disabilities may prevent students from self-identifying their needs. Faculty and staff have a duty to inquire if there is reasonable evidence to suggest that the student may require accommodations under the Ontario Human Rights Code (Policy on Accessible Education for Students with Disabilities, 2018). It is important for faculty and staff to explore potential disability-related reasons before making adverse decisions that can negatively impact the student's education. It is also important to respect the student's dignity and confidentiality. A respectful approach is asking if the student requires support for effective participation, providing information about ALS, OAREHRS and other accommodation processes, and documenting the inquiry process without pressuring students to share more than they are comfortable with. If the student

denies having a disability or elects to not participate, the student's choice will be respected. Faculty and staff should avoid intrusive or unwelcome inquiries after a negative reaction. Consultation with ALS is available to support the duty to inquire process.

3.0 Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 George Brown College

- 3.1.1** George Brown College has a duty to accommodate students with disabilities as stated by the Ontario Human Rights Code. Once disability-related needs are known, the legal onus shifts to those with the duty to accommodate. Meeting the needs of persons with disabilities requires actions that respect the dignity of those persons.
- 3.1.2** Students with disabilities must have equal access to all College programs and services. There must not be a limit placed on the proportion or number of students with disabilities admitted to College programs and/or courses, unless undue hardship¹ to the College can be demonstrated as required by the Ontario Human Rights Commission Policy on Accessible Education for Students with Disabilities (2018).
- 3.1.3** In the admission and selection process, no greater onus of proof with respect to capability should be required from a student with a disability than is required of other students.
- 3.1.4** Assessment of students with disabilities for admissibility is to be based on present functional ability and cannot be influenced by expected future deterioration or employment possibilities.
- 3.1.5** Students with disabilities are to be provided with assistance and accommodations on an individualized basis and the college will take a proactive approach and incorporate an inclusive and supportive mindset in identifying potential barriers and developing strategies to reduce them.
- 3.1.6** Once accepted to a program, students with disabilities are deemed to be capable of fulfilling the learning outcomes and essential

¹ The Tribunal has ruled that short of undue hardship, the highest point in the continuum of accommodation must be achieved. However, if there is a choice between two accommodations which are equally responsive to the person's needs in a dignified manner, then those responsible are entitled to select the one that is less expensive or that is less disruptive to the organization. [OHRC's [Policy](#) and guidelines on disability and the duty to accommodate (2001)].

requirements of the program, if provided with reasonable accommodations and services.

3.2 Students

- 3.2.1** If students wish to receive ALS supports, they have a responsibility to make their accommodation needs known by registering with ALS. Students are strongly encouraged to register with ALS as early as possible to avoid a delay in service. To register, students must submit documentation from a regulated health professional that describes the expected permanence of the disability as well as the physical, cognitive, and/or behavioural impacts on daily functioning. This can include previous assessments. Students who are in the process of being assessed by a health-care provider may be eligible to receive interim accommodations. For further information on documentation requirements, please visit [Disability Documentation](#).
- 3.2.2** Students must be able to competently perform the essential requirements of a course or program with reasonable accommodations. If an accommodation may potentially modify these requirements, alternative accommodations can be explored in consultation with the student, academic division, and Accessibility Consultant.
- 3.2.3** Students are not required to provide documentation of disability to George Brown College employees outside of the accommodation plan. In accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code, students are not required to disclose their specific diagnosis to ALS to receive accommodations. However, documentation outlining the functional impacts of disability is required to support understanding of student strengths and challenges to determine the most appropriate accommodations to support student learning.
- 3.2.4** Students are required to meet with their Accessibility Consultant to prepare the accommodation plan. Students have a responsibility to participate in discussions about possible accommodation solutions and answer questions/provide information about relevant restrictions or limitations. Reasonable accommodations will be provided, though not necessarily the accommodation preferred by the student. The accommodation plan will verify that the student is receiving supports and services from ALS.
- 3.2.5** Students are responsible for fulfilling course outcomes, for communicating needs to ALS and faculty as appropriate, and depending on the accommodation plan, for booking tests with the Assessment Centre and alerting faculty about test bookings.
- 3.2.6** Students should advise their Accessibility Consultant as soon as possible if changes to their accommodations are necessary. To make changes to an accommodation plan, students must meet with their

Accessibility Consultant either virtually, by phone or in person to discuss these changes.

- 3.2.7** Students are advised to meet with their faculty early in the term to discuss course requirements and accommodations they may need to ensure equal access to learning. The accommodations outlined on the accommodation plan should be mutually agreed upon as ALS, students and their faculty work together to implement the accommodations.

3.3 Accessible Learning Services (ALS)

- 3.3.1** Treat each student as an individual, and with respect and dignity.
- 3.3.2** Maintain confidentiality of all information submitted to the office; release information with written consent of the student.
- 3.3.3** Maintain documentation of disability and any other written records pertaining to the disability.
- 3.3.4** Determine which accommodations are appropriate based off the specific nature of the disability, student needs, and academic program requirements, and explain how these accommodations will be provided.
- 3.3.5** Help students access the necessary supports to ensure equitable participation in all George Brown College services, classes, and events.
- 3.3.6** Work with students to create an accommodation plan which is sent to faculty by ALS on behalf of the student.
- 3.3.7** Provide advocacy and support to students when communicating with faculty and negotiating accommodations.
- 3.3.8** Engage with faculty around identifying the essential requirements of courses and to determine the most suitable method of accommodation based on the student's needs.

3.4 Faculty

- 3.4.1** Treat each student as an individual, and with respect and dignity.
- 3.4.2** Acknowledge and provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations in a fair and timely manner.
- 3.4.3** Maintain the confidentiality of the student by ensuring secure and confidential storage of student accommodation information through the Accommodations portal available on Stu-View. Please refer to [Guidelines on Secure Handling of Confidential Information](#) for more details.
- 3.4.4** Ensure tests/exams are available in the Assessment Centre on time (when a student has arranged to take a test at the Assessment Centre).
- 3.4.5** Actively collaborate with the student and Accessibility Consultant to explore alternative accommodations if an accommodation alters the

requirements of the course.

3.4.6 Maintain academic standards of the College.

3.4.7 Adhere to the [Human Rights Discrimination & Harassment Policy](#).

3.5 Associate Dean

3.5.1 Associate Deans are required to provide support to faculty upon request to ensure that accommodations are implemented effectively, appropriately, and in a timely manner.

3.5.2 In the event of a disagreement between the faculty(s) and ALS regarding an accommodation please see Appendix A, Procedures.

3.6 Assessment Centre

3.6.1 The Assessment Centre provides accommodated testing for the student, receives and returns accommodated tests for faculty.

3.6.2 The Assessment Centre communicates concerns with accommodated testing to faculty and ALS, as needed.

3.6.3 The Assessment Centre coordinates and facilitates the required testing accommodations.

3.7 Work Integrated Learning (WIL)

3.7.1 George Brown College is required to provide reasonable accommodations according to accessibility legislation to facilitate WIL learning opportunities for its students (Ontario Human Rights Code Policy and Guidelines on Disability and Duty to Accommodate, AODA, 2005). If a WIL learning opportunity is outside of Ontario, please refer to local legislation.

3.7.2 Academic programs should proactively understand the process for WIL academic accommodations and their responsibilities upon receiving accommodation requests. If a disability is known or suspected, the program should guide the student to the ALS WIL Guidelines and Procedures.

3.7.3 In cases where it is determined that no existing WIL opportunity can reasonably accommodate the accessibility needs of a student, alternatives will be provided on a case-by-case basis within the constraints of the program's vocational learning outcomes.

3.7.4 ALS in collaboration with the academic program and the host organization, will develop a written accommodation plan that supports student achievement of WIL education learning outcomes when requested.

3.7.5 To receive accessibility accommodations during the WIL experience, the student needs to be registered with ALS. Whenever possible, the accommodation process should begin **two months** prior to beginning the WIL experience.

4.0 Office of Anti-Racism, Equity and Human Rights Services (OAREHRS)

- 4.1.1** The Office of Anti-Racism, Equity and Human Rights Services (“OAREHRS”) provides support, information, consultation and guidance to all GBC community members on human-rights based accommodation and accessibility concerns and complaints.
- 4.1.2** The OAREHRS team is responsible for matters that fall under the College’s Human Rights, Discrimination and Harassment Policy and the AODA Accessibility Policy.
- 4.1.3** OAREHRS engages in proactive education and training and also facilitates complaint resolution processes under these policies.

5. Appendices

Appendix 1: Accommodation Procedures

6. Related Materials

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005)

Integrated Accessibility Standards (subset of Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005)

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (1990)

Ontario Human Rights Code 1982 (Duty to Accommodate) Ontario Human Rights Code (1990)

Personal Health Information Protection Act (2004) Workplace Safety and Insurance Act (1997)

Policy on Accessible Education for Students with Disabilities (2018)

7. Related Policies

Academic Appeals Policy

Academic Integrity Policy

Accessible Media Policy

AODA Accessibility Policy

Employee Code of Conduct – Academic Staff, Administrative Staff, Support Staff

Expression of Educational Concerns and Complaints Policy

Code of Non-Academic Student Behaviour

Human Rights Discrimination and Harassment Policy

Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence Policy

Student Mental Health Policy

Appendix A: Accommodations Procedures

Accommodation Procedures

Students requiring disability-related accommodations at George Brown College may obtain assistance from ALS. Assistance includes guidance and support in accessing reasonable and effective accommodations to reduce or eliminate barriers and increase access and inclusion. ALS is committed to providing leadership for an efficient, effective, and respectful accommodations process. This process is a shared responsibility involving ALS, the student and relevant college employees.

Students requiring non-disability related accommodations (e.g., family status, creed, age etc.) at George Brown College may obtain assistance from the [Office of Anti-Racism, Equity and Human Rights Services](#). ALS will direct students to OAREHRs if they present with non-disability accommodation needs.

Registering with ALS

It is the student's responsibility to self-identify in order to register with ALS. Students are encouraged to register before the semester starts or as early in the semester as possible; however, ALS recognizes that many factors impact a student's ability or interest to access accommodation services and given this, students may register at any time during the academic year. It is worth noting that some accommodations take time to coordinate, thus the timing of some accommodations could be delayed depending on when a student registers.

Documentation

In accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code, students are not required to disclose their specific diagnosis to ALS to receive accommodations. However, documentation from a regulated health care professional outlining the functional impacts of disability is required and will help ALS understand the student's strengths and challenges, so that ALS can determine the most appropriate accommodations to support learning.

Accommodations are provided to students with both temporary and permanent disabilities. Students who are in the process of being assessed by a health-care provider may be eligible to receive interim accommodations. ALS also provides support for students who suspect they have a disability.

Determining the Academic Accommodation Plan

Accommodations are unique to the individual and are determined by:

- Student's previous experience with accommodations.
- Current functional impact of student's disability and the barriers the student encounters in the academic setting.
- Nature of the program and course outcome requirements.
- Best practices in the field of accommodations and accessibility.
- Relevant documentation.

The Accessibility Consultant considers potential options for addressing the student's functional impact, reducing or eliminating barriers, and creates a feasible and appropriate accommodation plan which does not modify course or program outcomes or lower program standards.

Managing Accommodation Concerns

ALS is committed to ensuring that all stakeholders in the accommodation process receive service and support in a timely, respectful, and inclusive manner, and that feedback from all stakeholders is gathered and responded to on a regular basis.

The faculty shall share accommodation concerns with ALS to seek a resolution.

The Associate Dean has a responsibility to ensure that accommodations are implemented once received by faculty, and to raise any issues in a timely manner with the Senior Manager of ALS for collaborative resolution.

The Senior Manager of ALS is responsible for addressing issues and resolving complaints and concerns regarding a student's accommodation plan, the implementation of the plan, or the quality of ALS service delivery. ALS shall promote student feedback systems and share complaints processes wherever possible.

The Assessment Centre Manager is responsible for addressing issues related to test accommodations and for communicating trends or concerns with the Senior Manager of ALS.

Students have the right to raise objections or file formal complaints or concerns about the implementation (or lack thereof) of a specific accommodation by contacting OAREHRS, or one of the administrators listed above.

Providing Feedback

Students can share complaints or feedback by completing the online [ALS Feedback Form](#). If a student requires support in completing the form, they can share feedback via phone or in writing by contacting the Welcome Desk Receptions at 416-415-5000 x 2107 (St. James) or x 4585 (Casa Loma) or x 5370 (Waterfront). The Senior Manager of ALS or designate will investigate all complaints in five working days and provide a written response to the student who made the complaint in ten working days. If the student has any further questions or concerns after receiving the written response, the student may contact and/or meet with the Senior Manager of ALS. If the student remains unsatisfied after meeting with the Senior Manager of ALS, the student may contact and/or meet with the Director of Student Wellbeing and Support.

Privacy and Confidentiality

ALS staff are responsible for ensuring that student information is handled with professional discretion and in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (1990) and the Personal Health Information Act (2004). ALS staff are trained in the collection, sharing, storage, and destruction of disability-related information in compliance with these acts.