



Accommodations and Access for Students with Disabilities/Medical Conditions

Category: Student Related;

Jurisdiction: Senate Teaching and Learning Committee;

Approval Authority: Senate;

Established on: April 30, 2001;

Amendments: October 1, 2010; January 23, 2017

Reviews: None;

Lakehead University is proud to be an institution that welcomes and supports a diverse student body. We are committed to fostering a campus community that is inclusive for all individuals, and ensuring that its services, supports and spaces are accessible for persons with disabilities/medical conditions. Accommodating students with disabilities/medical conditions requires the collaborative support of the entire university community.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish standards, in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and associated policies and regulations, for ensuring equality of access and opportunity for students with disabilities, without discrimination. For the purpose of this policy medical conditions are termed “disabilities”.

Scope

This policy applies to:

1. Lakehead University students with a disability and to applicants that may require accommodation during the University Admissions process;
2. all students, staff, faculty, senior administrators, volunteers, and guests of the University in regard to the support required for successful accommodation; and,

3. all on-campus and off-campus university-sponsored activities (e.g. co-operative education placements, internship, collaborative programs, online learning, etc.).

Policy Statement

The Ontario Human Rights Code stipulates that every person has a right to equal treatment with respect to services, goods, and facilities, and to occupancy of accommodation and employment without discrimination because of disability (Ontario Human Rights Code, Section 1, 2016). The University recognizes its duty to provide reasonable accommodation up to the point of undue hardship ("accommodations" in this Policy) to students with documented disabilities and for those seeking documentation, in its efforts to provide an accessible learning and working environment.

Lakehead University commits to:

1. ensuring reasonable and appropriate academic accommodations for students with disabilities in compliance with current legislation, while preserving the academic integrity and essential requirements of the University's programs and courses;
2. ensuring accommodations are provided on an interim basis for students seeking documentation;
3. ensuring accommodations are available for students with temporary or permanent disabilities;
4. ensuring students are fully integrated and participating in their accommodation and its processes;
5. protecting the privacy, confidentiality, comfort, autonomy and dignity of students with disabilities;
6. exercising flexibility and creativity in the provision of academic accommodations in support of individualized accommodation;
7. meeting the needs of students with disabilities in a timely manner through the implementation of this policy and its related procedures and guidelines;
8. ensuring that students are not disadvantaged in any way as a result of seeking accommodation;
9. considering the rights of students with disabilities when developing and implementing admission requirements, courses, course requirements, assessment methods, examination dates, scholarships and awards, programs, services, and informational material; and,
10. providing ongoing training for staff, faculty, senior administrators, volunteers, and guests on understanding their role in the accommodation process including their responsibilities under the Code.

Definitions

Academic Accommodation

An academic accommodation is an individualized adaptation in the way a student receives course curriculum and materials, participates in course activities and/or demonstrates task, course or program requirements. Academic accommodations are intended to bridge the gap between a disability, the functional limitations that impair academic functioning, and the demonstration of course requirements. Such accommodations may be up to the point of undue hardship, and shall not interfere with essential requirements.

Disability

The term “disability” covers a broad range and degree of perceived, temporary, chronic, or permanent conditions that may include,

- a) any degree or combination 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 service animal, support person, assistive appliance or device,
- b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- d) a mental illness,
- e) a medical condition, or
- f) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*

(See Ontario Human Rights Code, Section 10, 2016)

Essential requirements

Essential requirements is a specific term used in human rights legislation, referring to the bona fide requirements of a task, course or program that cannot be altered without compromising the fundamental nature of the task, course or program. The test for essential knowledge and skills necessary to complete a course or academic program, is clearly set out and described as “indispensable, vital and very important” (Ontario Human Rights Commission, Guidelines on Accessible Education, 2004, p. 24). The Human Rights Code indicates that a right is not infringed if the person with a disability is incapable of performing or fulfilling the essential requirements because of a disability.

Determining what is and what is not an essential requirement is critical in distinguishing which requirements can and should be altered.

“Essential” can therefore be defined by two factors:

1. the knowledge or skill must be demonstrated to meet the learning outcomes of the course or program; and
2. the knowledge or skill must be demonstrated in a prescribed manner.

Non-essential requirements are those requirements that would not detract from the main purpose of the task, course or program if they were waived. (Ontario Human Rights Commission, Guidelines on Accessible Education, 2004, p.25)

Functional limitations

Functional limitations are the effects of the disability on learning and in the learning environment (that prevent a student from completing a task or a range of tasks, whether simple or complex, that affect academic functioning) and are used to identify reasonable accommodations and in lieu of asking for diagnoses.

Resolutions for Disagreements

The principles stated in this policy will be used in resolving outstanding issues. In the event that agreement regarding the provision of student accommodations cannot be achieved between the involved parties, resolution will be sought using the Procedures for Accommodations and Access for Students with Disabilities/Medical Conditions.

Accountability

1. The Vice-Provost, Student Affairs, is responsible for the implementation, administration and review of this Policy in coordination with the Office of Human Rights and Equity.
2. All members of the University community are responsible for complying with this Policy.

Review of Policy

The Vice-Provost, Student Affairs, will ensure that the Policy on Accommodations and Access for Students with Disabilities/Medical Conditions is reviewed every five years and will recommend any changes deemed necessary to the University Senate.

In the interim, this Policy may be revised or repealed if:

1. the Approving Body deems it necessary or desirable to do so;
2. the Policy is no longer legislatively or statutorily compliant; and/or
3. the Policy is now in conflict with another Governing Document.

Acknowledgements

Lakehead University acknowledges the work of numerous Canadian post-secondary academic institutions whose policies informed the writing of this document.

Review Period: Every 5 years;

Date for Next Review: January 2022;

Related Policies and Procedures: Procedures Associated with the Policy on Academic Accommodations of Students with Disabilities;

Policy Superseded by this Policy: None;

The University Secretariat manages the development of policies through an impartial, fair governance process. Please contact the University Secretariat for additional information on University policies and procedures and/or if you require this information in another format:

Open: Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 4:30pm;

Location: University Centre, Thunder Bay Campus, Room UC2002;

Phone: 807-346-7929 or Email: univsec@lakeheadu.ca.