

Planning for University:

Transition Preparation
for Students with
Disabilities and/or Medical Conditions



Lakehead
UNIVERSITY

**Student Accessibility
Services**

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Welcome to Lakehead University!

Congratulations! You are about to embark on a very exciting phase of your life. Lakehead University Student Accessibility Services is thrilled to be a part of this endeavour, and we hope to make the transition from high school to post-secondary education smooth and simple. To aid in the transition process, we have prepared this Transition Planner. Included in this planner are steps to take to access supports and services at Student Accessibility Services, information about psychological assessments, common accommodations, the differences between high school and university including differences between special education at the high school and university level, Bursary for Students with Disabilities, contact information and more. Our staff is looking forward to working with you to help make your time at Lakehead University a positive and valuable experience!

Student Accessibility Services

Student Accessibility Services (SAS) coordinates services and facilitates the provision of reasonable academic accommodations for students with permanent or temporary disabilities and/or medical conditions. SAS staff collaborate with students, staff and faculty in developing strategies for a successful learning experience while maintaining the academic standards and integrity of the University. All information and documentation provided to SAS is confidential. Registering with Student Accessibility Services and receiving academic accommodations while at Lakehead University will not be reflected on a student's official university records, test results, academic transcripts or graduation documentation.

Which disabilities/medical conditions can be accommodated at the post-secondary level?

Students can be registered with Student Accessibility Services for a wide variety of disabilities and/or medical conditions including learning disabilities, psychiatric or mental health disabilities, chronic medical conditions, ADHD, mobility disabilities, acquired brain injuries, vision and hearing disabilities.

Students with disabilities and/or medical conditions can be found in all faculties and programs at Lakehead University including all undergraduate level programs, Masters and PhD level programs, the Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM) and the Juris Doctor program at the Bora Laskin Faculty of Law.

Students with Learning Disabilities, ADHD and Autism Spectrum Disorders

The Psycho-educational Assessment

Why do I need an assessment?

In order to access accommodations at the post-secondary level, a student with a Learning Disability, ADHD or an Autism Spectrum Disorder must have a valid assessment (a valid assessment has been completed within the past 4 years, or over the age of 18). As an adult pursuing post-secondary studies, assessments consider adult career goals and specific strategies for learning. In some cases, new accommodations may be recommended for the student to access. In addition, assessments are important for developing self-awareness and understanding.

What if my assessment is out-dated? What if I was never assessed, only identified in high school?

A student who was identified in high school but was never formally diagnosed or a student who has a dated assessment will be asked to provide documentation from a qualified practitioner who is certified in the areas of the disability. Temporary accommodations will be provided for one term based upon the IEP and/or dated documentation available and Student Accessibility Services will refer the student for an assessment. Funding options will also be explored to cover the expense of the assessment.

What does an assessment examine?

An assessment examines a student's thinking and reasoning abilities, attention and motivation, memory, organization, visual motor co-ordination and language. A student's achievement in listening, speaking, reading, writing, spelling and math skills are also examined. Relevant background information such as a student's medical history, family history, social and emotional factors are also included in an assessment.

Who conducts an assessment? Is it confidential?

The assessment of a learning disability, ADHD and/or Autism Spectrum Disorder is a complex process. (In Ontario, only a registered Psychologist or a Psychological Associate can diagnose the presence of a learning disability). Assessment results are also highly confidential. Results will not be sent to anyone without your permission and full knowledge. However, sharing the findings of the report with Student Accessibility Services staff will ensure that the appropriate supports are put in place for you.

What is involved in the assessment process?

Information is collected from interviews, questionnaires, review of prior assessments and/or documentation and standardized psychological assessment tools.

Students with Disabilities and/or Medical Conditions

Which disabilities/medical conditions are eligible for supports at Student Accessibility Services?

Student Accessibility Services provides supports and services for students with a wide variety of permanent or temporary disabilities, including:

- Acquired brain injuries
- Chronic medical conditions
- Psychological, emotional or psychiatric disabilities
- Physical or mobility disabilities
- Vision impairments
- Hearing impairments

Documentation Requirements:

What documentation do I need to access services?

Students with permanent or temporary disabilities/medical conditions other than learning disabilities, ADHD and/or Autism Spectrum Disorders must provide medical and/or psychiatric documentation of their disability. Student Accessibility Services requests that the Medical Documentation Form be completed by a recognized medical professional (ie. family physician, clinical psychologist, psychiatrist, neurologist, audiologist, ophthalmologist, etc). This form can be obtained by contacting Student Accessibility Services, please see the last page for contact information. Please note that students with mental health disabilities may request interim accommodations pending receipt of medical documentation.

In addition to the completion of the Medical Documentation Form, submitting your most recent IEP and/or IPRC meeting minutes from your high school will assist in determining the academic accommodations you require for your studies at Lakehead University.

What information should be included on my documentation?

The medical professional will be required to note the **functional limitations** caused by your disability/medical condition. Functional limitations are how your disability impacts your daily living and academic life (ie. difficulty with standing, sitting, handwriting, attention and concentration, memory, stress management, communication, organization and time management, etc). Disabilities and medical conditions affect individual students in very different ways, hence the importance of your medical practitioner completing the sections outlining how your disability or medical condition impacts you physically, cognitively and/or behaviourally.

The Steps to Accessing Academic Accommodations

Step One - Gather your Documentation

Once you have accepted an offer of admission to Lakehead University, email, fax or drop off your documentation of a permanent or temporary disability and/or medical condition to the office of Student Accessibility Services (SAS).

If you have a **Learning Disability, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and/or ADHD**, please provide the following:

- Psychological Assessment, signed by a registered psychologist. This must be current (completed within the last 4 years, or over the age of 18). If you need to update your assessment, the staff of Student Accessibility Services will assist you with the arrangements.
- Individual Education Plan (IEP) from your secondary school.
- Minutes from the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) from your secondary school (if applicable to you).

If you have a **disability other than a Learning Disability, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and/or ADHD**, please provide the following:

- A completed Medical Documentation Form (provided by SAS), signed by a practitioner qualified in the area of your disability/medical condition. Please note that students with mental health disabilities may request interim accommodations pending receipt of medical documentation.
- Individual Education Plan (IEP) from your secondary school.
- Minutes from the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) from your secondary school (if applicable to you).

Step Two - Contact the office of Student Accessibility Services

- Make an appointment with a staff member. The staff member will be able to advise you regarding any further documentation that may be required and answer any questions. It is recommended that your initial meeting be scheduled in advance of the academic year.
- If you are unable to meet in person, email or phone SAS to request a phone or video appointment.

Step Three - Once you have confirmed your course schedule, make a second appointment with the staff of Student Accessibility Services.

- Bring your list of courses, complete with Professor's names, to this appointment. You are able to print this from: **MyInfo > My Schedule or Drop Classes**. During this appointment your Confidential Accommodation Form will be completed. This form must be completed each term in order for you to receive your academic accommodations through SAS. Student Accessibility Services will send the form to all relevant professors.

Academic Accommodations

Lakehead University is committed to providing academic accommodations to students with permanent or temporary disabilities and/or medical conditions. It is important to ensure that accommodations are implemented without compromising the academic integrity of the course or program – there are no modified programs at the university level. Academic accommodations are intended to provide an equal opportunity for students whose disability may otherwise impede learning and/or their ability to demonstrate knowledge. Students must be able to gain the required knowledge, demonstrate and apply their knowledge to the satisfaction of the instructor.

Lakehead University recognizes that the needs of each student must be assessed individually to determine the appropriate accommodations. Student Accessibility Services suggests accommodations based upon the functional limitations indicated in the confidential medical documentation and/or the recommendations contained in a psychoeducational assessment. Students with the same disability may not have the same accommodations, as all accommodations are based upon each student's individual needs.

Examples of accommodations that may be granted, if specifically justified by documentation include:

- Reduced course load
- Alternate format textbooks and materials
- Access to class notes (ie. volunteer notetaker, permission to tape lectures, copies of lecture material such as overheads and/or PowerPoint presentations)
- Use of Assistive Technology
- A distraction reduced environment for taking tests/exams
- Tolerance of grammar and spelling errors in class and/or on tests/exams
- Extended time for tests/exams (indicating the amount of extra time)
- Use of a reader/scribe for tests/exams
- Use of a computer for tests/exams (indicating with/without spell/grammar check)
- Use of a non-programmable calculator
- Use of pre-approved memory aids during tests/exams (ie. formula sheet, word list, and/or fact sheet)
- Clarification of questions by professors on tests/exams

Bursary for Students with Disabilities (BSWD)

What is the BSWD? And why might you need the BSWD?

The BSWD is a bursary for students who self-identify as having a disability. The funds you receive as a student with a disability from the BSWD are given to you for specific purposes. The funds are to help you purchase approved and necessary equipment and/or services that will assist you with disability related academic expenses and allow you an equal chance to demonstrate your skills.

How do you apply for the BSWD?

Students interested in applying for the BSWD must schedule an appointment with Student Accessibility Services. Please see the last page for contact information.

When should you apply for the BSWD?

You should apply for the BSWD at the beginning of the academic year, as expenses incurred prior to being approved for the Bursary may not be reimbursed.

Does a student with a disability automatically qualify for the BSWD?

No one automatically qualifies for the Bursary – in order to be eligible to receive the BSWD you must have an academic need that is supported by appropriate documentation AND you must qualify for an OSAP loan.

Please note that you do not have to accept the loan in order to receive the Bursary, but you must be eligible for a minimum \$1 loan. You must have disability related needs that result in eligible accommodation expenses (ie. equipment and/or services).

What do you do after you receive the BSWD?

After receiving the BSWD, you will be required to submit receipts for purchases within 30 days of receiving the Bursary funds in order to verify that you have spent the money on the pre-approved, appropriate items. Any unused funds must be returned. Receipts for services are due at the end of each academic semester.

Are there tax implications with the BSWD?

Bursary funds are considered income and must be declared on your income tax return. Every student that is approved for a BSWD will receive a T4A for tax purposes. You may be required to pay tax on the Bursary if you earn enough money in a single year.

What are some general Differences between High School and University?

Unlike high school, university students have much more responsibility for their own success. Check out some of the differences below to find out some of the ways post-secondary differs from high school, which will help you to plan ahead for success!

High School	University
Teachers will remind students of assignment due dates and test dates.	Students are responsible for checking the course syllabus for assignment due dates and test dates.
Teachers will approach you if they believe that you need assistance.	Professors are usually open and approachable, but most expect you to initiate contact if you need assistance.
Teachers follow a textbook and structure lessons to help you understand the material in the textbook.	Professors may not follow the textbook and will expect you to use the class lectures to relate to the textbook readings.
Teachers will inform you of what they expect you to learn from the assigned readings.	It is up to you to read and understand the assigned readings without direction from the professor.
Teachers often write information on the board and give time for you to copy the information into your notes.	Professors may lecture non-stop, expecting you to identify important points for your notes. Professors may add details to the lecture on the board, but typically do not summarize it.
Mastery is usually seen as the ability to reproduce what you were taught in the form which it was presented to you.	Mastery is often seen as the ability to apply what you have learned to new situations and problems
You may graduate if you have passed all required classes with a grade of 50% or higher.	You may graduate only if your average in classes meets the departmental standard.
Studying time outside class is usually only 2 hours per week.	For each hour in class, you should study 2-3 hours outside of class.
Teachers often give time in class to allow students to work on papers and/or assignments.	Class time is typically lecture based and the majority of papers and/or assignments are completed outside of class time.
Teachers give tests often, and usually on small amounts of material.	Testing is usually infrequent and may be cumulative.

Differences between High School and University Continued:

What are some differences between High School special education and University disability services?

Our friendly staff will help to guide you through the process of transitioning from high school special education services to Student Accessibility Services at Lakehead University!

High School	University
Once identified with the secondary school's Special Education Department, a student's IEP is automatically renewed each year by special education staff.	Students must initiate all involvement with Student Accessibility Services. Students must also re-register each academic term (ie. Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer).
Communication is addressed to the student and the parent. Grades and student records are accessible to both students and parents.	Communication is addressed solely to the student. Grades and student records are accessible only to the student.
Consent from the student is not required for a parent to communicate with the high school special education department.	Parents may only communicate with Student Accessibility Services if the student provides written consent.
Students can have an IEP and access accommodations in high school without a formal assessment by a medical/psychological professional.	Students must provide documentation completed by a medical/psychological professional to access accommodations. Students with mental health disabilities may request interim accommodations pending receipt of medical documentation.
The school board provides funding for psycho-educational assessments, although assessments are not always required to receive accommodations.	The student is responsible for providing up to date documentation of a permanent or temporary disability and/or medical condition. Please note that funding may be available to assist with the cost of obtaining psycho-educational assessments.
High school may provide modified programs to help students of all levels succeed.	Programs are not modified at the university level; students must demonstrate the required level of skill in order to pass.
High school teachers have access to a student's disability related information and functional limitations in addition to the student's approved accommodations.	Professors do not receive information regarding a student's disability and/or functional limitations. A professor is only entitled to receive a student's approved accommodations.

Academic Supports and Training Available Through Student Accessibility Services

In addition to accessing accommodations, students registered with Student Accessibility Services can access academic supports throughout their university career. Students are encouraged to attend one on one academic support meetings, personalized assistive technology training and/or Learning Strategies sessions offered throughout the academic year.

Academic Support Meetings

Students may request regular Academic Support meetings to develop their academic skills throughout the school year. During these meetings, skills such as time management, notetaking, organization, test preparation and test taking can be developed and adapted to each student's learning style and individual needs. These meetings can be set on a weekly, bi-weekly, monthly or on an as-required basis.

Learning Strategies Sessions

Student Accessibility Services offers interactive learning strategies sessions throughout the academic year including:

- Introduction to Student Accessibility Services – review SAS procedures and information such as test booking, navigating the website and helpful SAS and general university tips!
- Time Management and Organization – learn about helpful time management and organizational strategies, including different types of calendars/planners and apps for success!
- Notetaking – discover tips, strategies, apps and assistive technology to help you to get the most out of your university lectures!
- Test Preparation and Test Taking – learn how to implement the 5 Day Study Plan to re-vamp your test preparation, in addition to test taking strategies and apps for success! This session has been a big hit for new and returning students!

Assistive Technology Training

Have you been using assistive technology throughout your high school career and would like to review some of the newer technology and/or apps available? Or have you never used assistive technology but are curious about how AT and/or apps could benefit you at the post-secondary level? SAS can provide personalized training on a wide variety of AT and apps including voice to text, text to voice, the LiveScribe smartpen, voice recorders, organization, study apps, troubleshooting, etc!

Choosing a Program at Lakehead University

Choosing a program or area of study can be difficult. In order to help guide you to make a choice that works for you, consider the following questions:

- What are my interests? Do my interests translate into a University program?
- What are my academic strengths? What are my academic challenges?
 - Does my program choice make the most of my strengths?
- Is my program choice influenced by others?
- Have I researched my program? Do I understand what the program involves, not only in the first year but in subsequent years of study?
 - Have I checked out the departmental websites on Lakehead University's web page www.lakeheadu.ca?
- Is further education or certification required to reach my career goal?
- What are the employability rates for students who have graduated from this program?

What Supports are Available to Assist with Choosing a Program at Lakehead University?

[Academic Advisors](#) at Enrolment Services are happy to assist with developing academic plans and reviewing course selections. Academic Advisors can also help with changing your major or program of study. You can drop in to the Enrolment Services office (UC 1004) or phone (807) 343-8675 to schedule an appointment with an Academic Advisor.

You may also contact your [Faculty Advisor](#) for program specific inquiries. Please note that students in the faculties of Business, Kinesiology, Natural Resources Management, Nursing, Engineering or Outdoor Recreation, Parks & Tourism must meet with their Faculty Advisor for all academic advising inquiries. You can find the list of Faculty Advisors by searching Faculty Advisor Contact List on the main Lakehead University web page.

Self-Advocacy

What is self-advocacy?

Self advocacy is a skill that centers on understanding yourself, understanding your rights as a student with a disability, making your own decisions and being able to effectively express your needs in a positive way to others. Self advocacy involves speaking up for yourself, asking for what you need, negotiating for yourself, knowing your rights and responsibilities, using the resources that are available to you and being able to explain your disability to others. Learning to be a self-advocate is an important skill and will help contribute to your success at both university and in the workplace.

To be a self-advocate in university you must:

- Know yourself as a learner
- Know what you need to be successful
- Know how to get what you need and communicate those needs appropriately

Why is self-advocacy important in university?

In order to receive disability related services and supports at university, you must self-disclose your disability to Student Accessibility Services. You are responsible for providing documentation of your disability, scheduling your appointments and booking your tests/exams, although the staff of Student Accessibility Services are happy to answer your questions and to guide you through the process of obtaining your documentation. A common myth for students coming from high school is that documentation is forwarded automatically to university and supports are also automatically put in to place without any student involvement.

To be a good self-advocate, you must:

- Accept your disability
- Understand your disability and your learning profile
- Know your rights as a student and also your responsibilities
- Be able to articulate your needs
- Be able to explain how a particular accommodation will enhance your academic performance
- Ask for help when needed, and know where to seek help

Tips for Academic Success

- Manage your time
 - Use a semester calendar to track all due dates and test dates.
- Attend every class
 - Consider university your job: attend, be on time, be prepared, read the chapter before class and review your notes from previous lectures.
- Read related material before class
 - Survey the chapter using active reading strategies: underline the main points, ask yourself questions, summarize in your own words.
- Chunk homework into manageable sections
 - Read 10 pages at a time or do a couple of questions, then take a break. The best break is a short 5-10 minute walk.
- Take good notes
 - Be attentive during class: think about what is being said, recognize important information, listen for key words, use abbreviations and write quickly.
 - Rewrite your notes after class – active learning helps to lock information into your long term memory!
- Start assignments as soon as they are given
 - By starting early, you can break large assignments and major papers down into smaller, more manageable tasks.
- Use effective study strategies
 - Study during the time you are most alert in order to stay focussed.
 - Use as many senses as possible: read, write, recite!
 - Study over a period of time: distributed practice helps to lock information into your long term memory. Avoid cramming!
 - See your Advisor to develop a study plan suited to your learning style.
- Get help when you need it
 - Seek help early: form a study group, get tutoring, attend learning strategies workshops, meet with your professors and/or teaching assistants and work with your Advisor before you fall far behind.
- Have a positive attitude
 - Persevere and reward yourself as you complete assignments.
- Be healthy
 - Get a good night's sleep (7-8 hours), eat healthily, drink lots of water and exercise.
- Set achievable goals for yourself
 - Planning ahead by starting work early and spacing out assignments as much as possible will help you to achieve your goals with much less stress.

Help is not Far Away: Student Accessibility Services Contact Information

Student Accessibility Services Thunder Bay Campus

Office: SC0003 – tunnel level of the Student Centre

Email: sas@lakeheadu.ca

Tel: (807) 343-8047

TTY: (807) 343-8906

Fax: (807) 346-7733

Web: <http://studentaccessibility.lakeheadu.ca>

Student Accessibility Services Orillia Campus

Office: OA 1030

Email: oraccess@lakeheadu.ca

Tel: (705) 330-4008 x 2103

Fax: (705) 329-4035

Web: <http://studentaccessibility.lakeheadu.ca/>