

Minimizing the impact of learning obstacles

A guide for professors

Access Service

Student Academic Success Service, University of Ottawa

This guide is also available in large print and in Braille. Please contact Access Service by phone at 613-562-5976 or by email at adapt@uottawa.ca.

* Ce document est également disponible en français sous le titre
Réduire l'impact des obstacles à l'apprentissage – Guide à l'intention du personnel enseignant

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Preface

This guide describes strategies and adaptive measures professors can apply to create an inclusive academic environment and help alleviate the different challenges faced by students with a permanent or temporary disability. It also showcases the collaborative nature of the work performed across the University community to provide students with opportunities to develop and sustain self-reliance, to tap into their strengths and to encourage their participation in university life. In addition to presenting the role of Access Service, we will illustrate the importance of your own influence on student learning as you incorporate inclusive teaching strategies in your class.

This guide also presents the University of Ottawa Policy on Accessibility under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA, 2005) and your rights and responsibilities under the Human Rights Code.

Finally, the guide concludes with adaptive measures for exams, which often raise questions from professors.

We trust this guide will be a useful tool. We encourage you to promote its use in both your professional and personal settings. Input from professors is always appreciated. Here's how to reach us:

Access Service – Student Academic Success Service (SASS)

Desmarais Building, Room 3172

55 Laurier Ave. East

Phone: 613-562-5976

Fax: 613-562-5159

Email: adapt@uOttawa.ca

www.sass.uottawa.ca/access

University of Ottawa Policy on Accessibility

The University of Ottawa is committed to recognizing the dignity and independence of all employees, students, faculty and visitors, and it seeks to ensure that persons with disabilities have genuine, open and unhindered access to University goods, programs of study, services, facilities, accommodations and employment.

Legal obligations to provide adaptive measures

Ontario Human Rights Code

The *Ontario Human Rights Code* is for everyone. It is a provincial law that gives everybody equal rights and opportunities without discrimination in specific areas, such as employment, housing and services. The Code's goal is to prevent discrimination and harassment based on 15 grounds, including race, sex, disability and age. All other Ontario laws must agree with the Code.

For further information, please consult the following documents:

[Policy and guidelines on disability and the duty to accommodate](#)

[Guidelines on accessible education](#)

[Guide to Your Rights and Responsibilities under the Human Rights Code](#)

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA, 2005)

About 1.85 million people in Ontario have a disability. That's one in seven people. Over the next 20 years as the population ages, the number will rise to one in five Ontarians. Ontario needs to be more accessible to people with disabilities. It makes good sense - socially and economically.

The goal of the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(2005\)](#) is to make Ontario accessible by 2025 through the development of accessibility standards, making Ontario the first jurisdiction in Canada to develop, implement and enforce mandatory accessibility standards. The Act applies to both the private and public sectors.

Meeting the standards

Ontario is developing accessibility standards to identify, remove and prevent barriers so people with disabilities are better able to take advantage of everything the province has to offer. In addition to customer service, development of standards in other key areas is underway, including: information and communications; built environment; employment; transportation.

Accessibility standards for customer service

The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation is now law. In response, the University of Ottawa has adopted an official policy on accessibility and guidelines on accessible goods and services, which you can view on the [University's accessibility page](#).

Mandatory training

In accordance with the AODA, 2005 the University of Ottawa is required to provide training on accessibility standards for client services to all employees, including professors. The training session, called Service

Excellence Includes Accessibility, can be found on the [University's accessibility page](#). If you have not yet completed the training yet, we invite you to do so now.

Access Service mandate

Access Service works with the University community to help create an inclusive academic environment thanks to services and adaptive measures aimed at minimizing the impact of learning obstacles.

The AS team is composed of qualified professionals who design and offer a range of services: academic support and learning assistance, transcription, interpretation and adapted exams. Each of these services and adaptive measures can operate at different levels to respond as effectively as possible to each student's needs.

Adaptive measures inventory

Below is a non-exhaustive inventory of possible adaptive measures:

- Assessment of students' specific needs and individualized follow-ups
- Sign language interpretation (ASL and LSQ), computerized note-taking or real-time captioning
- Information on how to obtain tutoring and note-taking services
- A digital recorder
- Assistance with library research
- Transcription of text into:
 - Audio-digital and other electronic formats
 - Braille or large-print format
- Adapted exams:
 - Additional time
 - A quiet space
 - A computer and word processor with spell check
 - The use of text-to-speech or speech-to-text software (e.g., Kurzweil, Dragon NaturallySpeaking)
 - Transcription of exams into large print, electronic format or onto coloured paper
 - Scribes (French and English)
- Adaptation of physical environments:
 - Classrooms
 - Labs
 - Exam rooms
- Individualized support in learning strategies:
 - Time management
 - Stress management
 - Preparing for exams
 - Writing process
- Training in adaptive technologies and in other innovative measures designed to meet students' learning needs (Dragon NaturallySpeaking, Kurzweil, Inspiration, MindManager)
- Information about the Financial Aid and Awards Service:
 - Bursary for Students with Disabilities (BSWD)
 - Canada Study Grant for Students with Permanent Disabilities
 - Bursary for Part-Time Students with a Permanent Disability

- Information about the Student Academic Success Service (SASS):
 - Aboriginal Resource Centre
 - Academic Writing Help Centre
 - Career Service
 - Counselling and Coaching Service
 - Student Mentoring

Access Service's student population

Access Service staff encounter students who experience difficulties resulting from any of the following conditions:¹

- Acquired brain injury
- Attention-deficit disorder
- Chronic health problems
- Hearing impairment/deafness
- Learning disability
- Motor or mobility problems
- Mental health disabilities
- Visual impairment/blindness
- Autism spectrum disorders
- Temporary conditions (fracture, post-operative needs, etc.)

These functional limitations are for the most part invisible, and students are affected by them in very different ways. This is why adaptive measures and follow-up are provided on an individual basis.

Academic entrance requirements

All students registered with Access Service have met the program's academic entrance requirements. The proposed adaptive measures aim to make education accessible while respecting the academic integrity of each course and program. Adaptive measures should never dilute the quality of an essay, a course or a diploma. Providing a student with adaptive measures and support is a matter of equity.

The professor's role

The impact of similar conditions on learning varies considerably from one individual to the next. Factors include the university context, the student's experience, the specifics of programs and the overall environment. Constructive dialogue with students who experience difficulties in learning not only helps uncover the particulars of their learning needs, but also guides professors in identifying the most suitable adaptive measures throughout the semester to support students' efforts and ultimate success.

Do feel free to contact Access Service or to refer students there as soon as you suspect they are encountering difficulties beyond those the average student faces. A learning specialist at Access Service will be pleased to speak with you and suggest options or adaptive measures.

¹ See Appendix 1 for a definition of each condition.

Note for course outlines

To better inform your students about the services offered, we invite you to include the following note in your syllabus:

ACCESS SERVICE

For students who need adaptive measures

Students who have a disability or functional limitation and who need adaptive measures (changes to the physical setting, arrangements for exams, learning strategies, etc.) to progress or participate fully in university life should contact Access Service right away:

- By visiting our office on the third floor of the Desmarais Building, Room 3172
- By filling out the [online registration form](#)
- By calling us phone at 613-562-5976

Access Service designs services and implements measures to break down barriers to learning for students with physical or mental health problems, visual impairments or blindness, hearing impairments or deafness, permanent or temporary disabilities, or learning disabilities.

Assessing adaptive measures

Access Service determines which adaptive measures to implement based primarily on:

- the recommendations outlined in a psycho-educational assessment report or in a letter from a family physician or another health specialist,
- the reality of the university context,
- the student's experience and the skills he or she has developed, and
- the specifics of the program of study and courses.

In addition, Access Service performs a functional evaluation with the student, which provides valuable insight into both the difficulties at hand and the adaptive measures needed to minimize the impact of learning obstacles and facilitate the achievement of academic goals. Not all adaptive measures are appropriate in all contexts.

Confidentiality

As the information contained in student files is protected under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, as well as under the University of Ottawa's *Student Record Policy 14a*, Access Service personnel cannot discuss confidential and private information with professors or employees unless the student is present or has provided consent.

Genuine inclusion: Universal design in in university teaching

Since the adoption of the *Human Rights Code* in the 1980s, Canada’s postsecondary institutions have had to provide adaptive measures enabling persons with disabilities to pursue postsecondary studies. Though this integration has allowed many students to come into the setting, it remains grounded in a *medical model* — a vision of disability that places the responsibility for accessibility problems on the shoulders of persons with disabilities. Students themselves have to ask for help, prove they have a disability and comply with the recommendations of health professionals and adaptive-measures specialists to overcome barriers in the academic setting.

In contrast, under the *social model*, society’s structure is seen as the main factor in disabling individuals. So when barriers prevent these persons from taking part fully in everyday life, we speak of persons in disabling environments or situations.² Including persons living with a disability effectively requires changes in the environmental factors and, with that, a new way of saying things (see Table 1).

Table 1 - Medical model and social model

Medical model	Social model
Disability is a deficiency or abnormality	Disability is a difference
Being disabled is negative	Being disabled, in itself, is neutral
Disability resides in the individual	Disability arises from interactions between the individual and society
The remedy for disability-related problems is cure or normalization of the individual	The remedy for disability-related problems is a change in the interactions between the individual and society
The agent of remedy is the professional who affects the arrangements between the individual and society	The agent of remedy can be the individual, an advocate, or anyone who affects the arrangements between the individual and society

Gill, C. (1994). *Two Models of Disability*. Chicago Institute of Disability, University of Chicago

Enter the concept of universal instructional design, which aims to provide accessibility for all. At its core is the principle that products and settings are designed with all users in mind right from the outset, thus reducing the need for special or adaptive measures after the fact (see Table 2). Those who aspire to universal instructional design think and act according to these seven supporting principles:³

- Accessible and equitable-use design
- Flexible use, participation and presentation options
- Straightforward and consistent design
- Explicitly presented and readily perceived information
- Supportive learning environment
- Little or no unnecessary physical effort or requirements
- Student-friendly and method-friendly learning space

² See the work conducted by Fougeyrollas and colleagues at the [International Network on the Disability Creation Process](#).

³ [Universal Instructional Design Principles at the University of Guelph](#).

Table 2 - Accommodation approach and Universal design approach

Accommodation approach	Universal design approach
Access is a problem for the individual and should be addressed by that person and the disability service program	Access issues stem from inaccessible, poorly designed environments and should be addressed by the designer
Access is achieved through accommodations in and/or retrofits of existing requirements	The system /environment is designed, to the greatest extent possible, to be usable by all
Access is retroactive	Access is proactive
Access is often provided in a separate location or through special treatment	Access is inclusive
Access must be reconsidered each time a new individual uses the system, i.e. is consumable	Access, as part of the environmental design, is sustainable

To learn more about universal design, visit the UD websites for the [University of Guelph](#) and the [University of Arkansas at Little Rock](#). Both institutions have expertise in applying universal instructional design in postsecondary settings.

Instructional strategies and adaptive measures

The following teaching strategies and adaptive measures can generally be applied to most students experiencing difficulties. Remember that the impact of similar conditions on learning varies considerably from one individual to the other. Determining factors include the university context, the student's experience, the specifics of programs and the overall environment.

For students with mental health conditions, learning disabilities, brain trauma, attention deficit disorder, chronic health problems or Asperger syndrome

In the classroom or lab

- Provide clear structure in the form of a syllabus, firm due dates and well-defined expectations.
- Provide course notes, copies of overheads and other materials before class, if possible.
- Briefly review your previous lecture(s) before starting new material and provide overviews of new learning objectives.
- Summarize important points at the end of class, perhaps by using a board or overhead projector.
- Provide both verbal and written instructions with reminders of impending due dates for assignments or examinations.
- Be patient. Sometimes communicating with someone with a disability can take a bit longer, requiring you or the other person to repeat yourselves several times.
- Dismiss your stereotypes and avoid making assumptions about a person's disability or capabilities. Many people with disabilities often talk about being frustrated with people assuming what they can or cannot do.
- Speak directly to the person with a disability and not to their support person, companion or interpreter.
- Diversify assignments to allow all students to use their specific strengths (oral presentations, poster presentations, written assignments).
- Encourage students to create study groups and share class notes.
- Permit students with chronic health conditions to leave class for short periods and permit access to the washrooms, as needed.

At the request of the student

- Assist in identifying potential tutors and/or note takers.
- Reserve seating near the board, at the front of the room or close to the door.
- Allow the use of audio recorders or note takers.
- Lean towards flexibility for absences and late or forgotten assignments.
- Meet with the student to discuss specific learning needs, strategies for success, alternatives to course assignments and methods of evaluation.

During tests and exams

- Point out the important sections in course plans, textbooks and readings to guide test and exam preparation; where possible, provide samples of tests and exams.
- When possible, allow the use of a calculator, dictionary, computer and word processor with spell-check as needed.

- Offer the student alternatives to traditional course work and methods of evaluation, e.g., an oral exam or presentation instead of a written exam, or essays instead of multiple-choice and short-answer questions.
- When possible, allow the use of memory aids for formulas or definitions.
- Consider minimal deductions for spelling mistakes and poor grammar skills, and partial marks when the student demonstrates understanding of the process but has not achieved the correct end result.
- Allow the student to eat and drink during exams if the medical condition requires.

For students who are deaf or have hearing impairments

In the classroom or lab

- Support your oral presentations with visual aids like tables or graphs, an overhead projector, PowerPoint presentations and captioned films or videos.
- Turn off unused equipment to eliminate annoying background noise.
- Speak at a normal pace, as clearly and distinctly as possible and without exaggerating lip movements.
- Before talking to the students, be certain that you have their attention.
- Do not lecture with your back turned to the class or and do not pace as you speak.
- Try not to cover your mouth while talking and avoid talking while handing out papers.
- To limit glare, avoid standing in front of a window or in bright light.
- Correct students' work based on content rather than grammatical form.
- If possible, find a quiet place to converse, because background noise can be hard to filter out.
- Do not put your hands, glasses or other objects like pens or pencils in front of your face when speaking as this can make speech-reading difficult as well.

At the request of the student

- Repeat questions and comments from the class before responding.
- Help identify people who can offer note-taking or tutoring services.
- Wear an FM sound transmitter, on request.
- Move away from the light, speak a little more slowly, or even use a pen and paper or digital device.
- If necessary, you can contact the student via email or by Bell Relay Services (1-800-855-0511). Interpreters can be made available for discussions outside classroom time but adequate advance notice is required for arrangements to be made.

When the student is accompanied by interpreters

- Meet with both the student and the interpreters to discuss possible adaptive measures for the classroom or laboratory.
- Provide the interpreters with brief course outlines as soon as possible.
- Allow the interpreters to sit or stand near you so the student can watch you and "read your words" at the same time.
- Watch the student but listen to the interpreters when they are relaying what the student is saying. When you speak, look at and address the student, not the interpreters.

- Take short breaks in your speaking to allow the interpreters to catch up. Also, plan a 10-minute break for every 50 minutes of class presentation, as interpretation requires a great deal of concentration and endurance.
- Keep in mind that only one speaker can be interpreted at a time during group projects.
- Be aware that interpreters are bound by their professional code of ethics to interpret *all* spoken messages while in the presence of the student, including informal chatting.
- When video material is not close-captioned, provide enough light to allow the deaf student to see the interpreters. The interpreters also need to be positioned near the viewing screen so that the student can see the interpreters and the video simultaneously.
- Do not be concerned with the initial distraction that the interpreters' hand movements may cause for the rest of the class; tests show that people quickly become accustomed to an interpreter's presence.
- Advise Access Service if you are planning to cancel a class or to change locations, such as for a field trip. Because interpreters are hired on an hourly basis, advance notice of changes helps reduce costs and allows for better use of the interpreters' skills.

For students with motor and mobility impairments

In the classroom or laboratory

- If the classroom or laboratory is inaccessible to students using a wheelchair, be prepared to have the location changed. If a location change raises concerns, please contact your academic unit or the Registrar's office.
- Students with upper-body weakness or paralysis may be unable to raise their hand; make eye contact to include the student in classroom discussions.
- Ensure that the student can see you, the board or the screen at all times.
- It may take a student with a mobility problem longer to reach classrooms. Be considerate of this and, if need be, ensure that a copy of any handouts distributed before the class is available for the student.
- Provide help for research activities, if needed.
- Be familiar with wheelchair protocol and tips on how to interact and communicate with a student who has physical disabilities. When talking to a student in a wheelchair for more than a few moments, sit down, kneel or squat, if convenient; this is not only courteous, but helps protect the wheelchair user from neck strain due to looking upwards constantly.
- A person's assistive device is part of his or her personal space. Do not hang or lean on the chair, as this is comparable to hanging or leaning directly on the person.

Field trips

- Field trips need to be planned with all students' needs in mind, including transportation.
- Plan activities at accessible locations so that all students can participate. If your planned activity is not inclusive, substitute it for an alternative activity with the same learning outcomes.
- Provide additional time for the activity and for transportation.

For students who are blind or have visual impairments

In the classroom or laboratory

- Provide the course outline, the list of reading requirements and copies of overhead material, etc. in digital format whenever possible.
- When digital formats are not available, provide print material sufficiently far in advance to ensure that transcription requirements (into audio-digital or other e-format, enlarged format or Braille) can be met in time. Be as precise as you can about the texts and pages that will be used.
- Ensure course packs are clearly legible, defect-free and complete.
- Provide verbal explanations for graphs or charts used in class.
- Read aloud all material written on the board.
- Use effective contrast for handouts printed on white paper.
- Provide clear and concise instructions.
- Avoid the excessive use of overheads and PowerPoint presentations. When needed, provide the electronic version to the student beforehand.
- Use verbal descriptions when gesturing.

In a laboratory setting

- Pair the student with a sighted partner.
- Discuss safety concerns both with the student and with Access Service.
- If the student reads Braille, contact Access Service to have lab equipment tagged in Braille.

At the request of the student

- If possible, copy your teaching material onto the student's USB key.
- Provide your contact information by email or orally.

During tests and exams

- Avoid online tests unless they have been tested for accessibility.
- For exams that have graphic content (charts, illustrations), it is best to call on Access Service to have the material transcribed into a format that is accessible to the student. If needed, you can provide an alternate evaluation.
- Offer alternatives to more traditional assignments and exams, such as an oral presentation instead of a written assignment or exam, where appropriate.

What should you do when communicating and interacting with someone who uses a service animal?

- Do not ask the owner to leave the animal in different location, such as outside your office or classroom.
- Do not talk to or pet a service animal, as this distracts it from its work.
- Do not feed or offer treats to the animal.
- Avoid deliberately startling the animal.
- Remember that not all service animals wear special collars or harnesses. If you are not sure and you need to verify why an animal is present, ask the owner if it is indeed a service animal.

- The owner is responsible for maintaining control over the animal at all times.
- You are not responsible for cleaning up after the animal or feeding it, but you may provide water if the owner requests it.

Are there any locations on campus where service animals are not permitted?

Under the standard rules, universities must permit service animals in *all* areas to which the public normally has access. There are only a few exceptions where a service animal would be excluded by law:

- The *Health Protection and Promotion Act* (1990) does not allow animals in places where food is manufactured, prepared, processed, handled, served, displayed, stored, sold or offered for sale. However, the *Act* does contain specific exemptions for service dogs only, allowing them to accompany their owners into areas where food is normally served, sold or offered for sale.
- In some unique situations where the presence of the animal presents a significant risk for another person, say in cases of severe allergies, the University is required to meet the needs of both persons and would have to devise an accommodation plan that enables both of them to access services and goods accordingly.

Adapted Exams

Adapted exams service

The Access Service team implements adaptive measures for exams. These measures are determined by reviewing medical documentation provided by health professionals and by a functional evaluation of the student conducted by learning specialists at Access Service.

Access Service's adapted exam team works closely with academic units and instructors to ensure that all academic regulations are precisely followed when students write an exam in our locations. The exam content is not modified; only the format may be changed to make it accessible, e.g. enlarged print or electronic file.

If you have any questions about adapted exams at Access Service, please contact us:

- by phone: 613-562-5800, ext. 4493
- by fax: 613-562-5159
- by email: examen@uottawa.ca
- [on the web](#)

The adapted exam process

In order to implement the adaptive measures your students need to take their exams, Access Service needs to know when those exams will take place. The Notice of Examination (NOE) is the online form you use to notify Access Service and your academic unit that an in-class test, quiz or evaluation is scheduled for your course.

The NOE can be filed even if you are not yet aware whether any of your students are registered with Access Service. Even when there are multiple students in your course registered with Access Service, only one NOE is required per exam. Access Service recommends that you file NOEs for all of your courses; some academic units require you to do so.

When do you file a Notice of Examination?

You can fill out the form as early as one session in advance, and as late as ten (10) calendar days before the exam (for Spring and Summer sessions, NOEs are accepted up to seven (7) days before the exam date). An NOE cannot be submitted outside of this timeframe. You do not need to file an NOE for Fall or Winter final exams that are scheduled by the Registrar. They will send information about these exams directly to academic units and to Access Service.

What if you do not file a Notice of Examination at the beginning of the session?

If a student registered with Access Service enrolls in your undergraduate course, you will be notified by email at the beginning of the session. The email will request that you fill out the Notice of Examination form. A few weeks later, you will receive the Confirmation of Adaptive Measures letter from the student's learning specialist by email. This message will also remind you to file the Notice of Examination form.

How to file a Notice of Examination

Filing an NOE is a two-step process. The first step is to fill out the [Notice of Examination form](#), which is online and can be accessed both on and off campus. Once you submit the form, you will be taken to a screen that asks you to retrieve the Request to Finalize email. Click on the link in the email to complete the second step in the

process. Once you click on the link, your academic unit and Access Service will receive the Notice of Examination, and you will receive a confirmation. You will also receive this confirmation message when Access Service receives the Notice of Examination from the Registrar for your course's final exam.

What happens after the Notice of Examination is confirmed?

After you have finalized the date of your in-class exam, the students in your class who are registered with Access Service will receive an email notifying them that an exam has been scheduled for them. Students then need to confirm where they will write the exam, namely at Access Service with their authorized adaptive measures, or in class without adaptive measures. Students have until seven days before the exam date to confirm their choice (or four days for Spring and Summer courses).

About one week before the scheduled exam, you will receive a reminder to complete a Proctor Instruction form and to submit the exam questionnaire to the administrative representative in your academic unit. Academic units must upload the copy of the exam and the Proctor Instruction form into the accommodation management system no later than 9:00 a.m., two business days before the exam.

If no students in your course have registered with Access Service, you will not receive any requests or reminders from Access Service, even if you have filed a Notice of Examination.

Once the student completes an exam, it is sealed and returned to the academic unit by an Access Service employee within two business days. The administrative representative in your academic unit signs and dates the delivery slip upon receipt of the exam.

Alternate formats for exams

Access Service can transcribe an exam into an alternate format to provide students with the technology they need to complete their exam. If you have any questions about the transcription process, please contact the Adapted Exam Service at 613-562-5800, extension 4493, or at examen@uottawa.ca.

Contacting the student during an exam

If a student asks that you contact them during the exam or if you need to speak with a student in order to clarify questions, correct errors or provide extra information, you may do so by phone or in person.

- By phone: contact Access Service's reception desk (613-562-5976) to find out about the Exam Hotline
- In person: go to the Adapted Exam Service, Desmarais Building, Room 3172

Adaptive measures for in-class exams

If you would like to provide adaptive exam measures for students who prefer to take their exams in class or who have missed the deadline to confirm that they wish to write their exams at Access Service, please contact Access Service directly (613-562-5976).

Deferred exams

All students are required to meet faculty, school or departmental requirements for deferred exams, as defined by the policies and procedures specific to each academic unit. The Notice of Examination form allows you to specify that you are filing for a deferred or supplemental exam. Please check with your academic unit to learn who is responsible for authorizing deferrals and supplemental exams in your faculty.

Request for a temporary exemption

Students who request to be excused from an exam on a particular day, or who wish to extend the deadline to submit a paper for personal reasons, may obtain a temporary exemption certificate (see Appendix 4) from Access Service or from the University of Ottawa's Counselling and Coaching Service.

Generally, this certificate must be presented to the faculty's undergraduate office no later than five days after the missed exam or the submission deadline.

A certificate may not be used to justify or cancel a low mark on an exam that has already been written or on a paper that has been handed in and graded.

Students who have presented a certificate and have been authorized by their faculty to miss a final or supplemental examination will be allowed to write a deferred examination on a date chosen by the faculty.

Deadlines for exams at Access Service

Professors file a Notice of Exam no later than ten (10) calendar days before the exam date (seven (7) days for spring and summer courses).

Students confirm the location of their exam (in class or at Access Service) no later than seven (7) days before the exam date (four (4) for spring and summer courses).

Academic units upload the copy of the exam and the instructions for proctors no later than 9:00 a.m. two (2) business days before the exam date (year-round).

Rights and responsibilities

Rights and responsibilities of students with disabilities

STUDENTS HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

- Equal access to services and programs offered at the University of Ottawa
- Adapted measures tailored to their specific condition or needs
- Confidentiality and privacy, which are protected under [Policy 14a](#)

STUDENTS HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO:

- Identify their specific needs to an Access Service advisor and to their professors
- Provide Access Service with appropriate documentation, or be willing to undergo assessment if the documentation is no longer valid or none is available
- Communicate with an Access Service advisor about their needs for academic learning support
- Fully understand, and comply with, Access Service's procedures and University of Ottawa policies
- Obtain permission from their professors before using digital audio devices to record courses for their own learning purposes
- Meet their curriculum requirements

Rights and responsibilities of professors and other faculty members

PROFESSORS AND OTHER FACULTY MEMBERS HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

- Determine course content and methods of instruction
- Ensure that the academic requirements and criteria of their courses are not compromised
- Consult Access Service if they feel the adaptive measures are inappropriate for the course content or format
- Determine how to adjust their teaching style to meet requests for adaptive measures
- Ensure that any audio-taping of lectures is done solely for students' academic use

PROFESSORS AND OTHER FACULTY MEMBERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- Working with Access Service to provide adaptive measures while meeting the academic requirements of the course
- Working with the student and Access Service to resolve disagreements over adaptive measures
- Discussing alternative adaptive measures with the student and Access Service
- Maintaining the student's dignity and privacy

Rights and responsibilities of Access Service

ACCESS SERVICE HAS THE RIGHT TO:

- Expect students to understand and comply with the procedures and regulations necessary for Access Service to operate efficiently
- A safe environment free of excessive disturbance, intrusion or harassment in accordance with the [Access Service Code of Conduct](#)

ACCESS SERVICE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- Reviewing all documentation to ensure its authenticity and validity and notifying students when updates are required
- Carrying out regular functional evaluations to allow students to identify their individual needs in relation to the requirements of the courses they are taking
- Helping establish and implement adaptive measures and other forms of academic support that aim to reduce the barriers to learning
- Providing individual follow-ups with students to develop complementary adaptive measures and to share learning strategies and skills
- Periodically re-evaluating a student's adaptive measures in recognition that their needs and learning environment may have changed
- Providing expertise and resources to professors and faculty members
- Promoting the respect of students' rights throughout the University community.

References

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Appendix 1: Definitions of each condition

Asperger syndrome

Asperger syndrome is a complex condition on the autistic spectrum. People with Asperger syndrome generally function well in their daily lives. However, they may avoid social contact as much as possible, because it may make them uncomfortable. For example, decoding non-verbal communication (facial expressions, gestures, etc.) of the person they are talking to is particularly difficult for them, thus making social interaction more challenging. Furthermore, they may not grasp the purpose or importance of social norms.

People with Asperger are generally of average or superior intelligence and have a very good memory (particularly photographic) and normal cognitive abilities. They may have an encyclopaedic knowledge of topics that interest them. On the other hand, while they may possess a large vocabulary, they often have difficulty using it in social situations.

Finally, people with Asperger may experience sensory hyper- or hyposensitivity. In fact, hypersensitivity to noise and touch is often pronounced and can significantly affect concentration and involvement.

Attention-deficit disorder with or without hyperactivity (ADD/ADHD)

Attention-deficit disorder (ADD) and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) can interfere with the learning process because they reduce the ability to concentrate and pay attention. People with ADD or ADHD may display inattentive, impulsive and/or hyperactive behaviours.

Read more about adult ADHD from the [British Columbia Division of CMHA](#).

Brain injury (BI)

BI is damage to the brain resulting from a traumatic or non-traumatic event that can cause temporary, prolonged or permanent impairment in cognitive, emotional, behavioural or physical functioning.

Read more at the [Ontario Brain Injury Association's website](#).

Chronic health problems

Chronic health problems generally stem from a dysfunction in the internal organs of the cardiovascular, digestive or endocrine systems. They can include acquired immune deficiency syndromes, allergies, asthma, cancer, cerebral palsy, Crohn's disease, diabetes, epilepsy, fibromyalgia, irritable bowel syndrome, migraine headaches, muscular dystrophy and sleep disorders.

Read more at the [Public Health Agency of Canada's website](#).

Hearing impairment or deafness

Hearing impairment or deafness is defined by the extent of loss of functional hearing and by one's reliance on visual communication. Some students who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing can read lips, while others use sign language to communicate. Other students use gestures, writing or interpreters. For a great majority, it's common to use a variety of hearing devices to amplify sounds. Keep in mind that a hearing aid helps compensate for hearing loss but does not replace it.

Read more at the [Canadian Hearing Society's website](#).

Learning disability

Learning disabilities refer to a number of disorders that can hinder the acquisition, organization, retention, understanding or use of verbal or nonverbal information. These disorders affect learning in individuals who otherwise demonstrate at least average abilities essential for thinking and/or reasoning. As such, learning disabilities are distinct from generalized intellectual disabilities.

Read more at the [Learning Disabilities Association of Canada's website](#).

Mobility impairment

A mobility impairment can be any condition that affects the ability to move, ranging from lack of coordination to complete paralysis. Mobility impairments can be caused by illness, injury or trauma at birth or in utero. The functional limitations arising from some conditions may be invisible (e.g., arthritis), while other limitations are easily noticeable (e.g., people using wheelchairs.). Paraplegia or quadriplegia, multiple sclerosis, hemiplegia, loss or major functional impairment of a limb, and muscular dystrophy are among the many conditions that can result in mobility impairments.

Psychological or psychiatric condition

Psychological or psychiatric conditions are complex and multifaceted, with a range of inherent characteristics – chronic or short-term, moderate or severe – that cover a broad spectrum. The term psychological or psychiatric disabilities usually used to refer to persons with diagnoses such as severe anxiety, bipolar disorder, clinical depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), neurosis, schizophrenia, alcohol or drug addiction, suicidal tendencies, eating disorders, personality disorders, or phobias.

Read more at the [Canadian Mental Health Association website](#).

Speech or language impairment

Some people may experience communication difficulties because they have impaired speech or language use. These can stem from cerebral palsy, hearing loss or another condition that makes it difficult to pronounce words, causes slurring or stuttering, or prevents individuals from expressing themselves or understanding written or spoken language. Persons who have severe difficulties may use communication boards or other assistive devices.

Visual impairment or blindness

The definition for legal blindness may vary among countries. Millions of people have partial or complete loss of vision in Canada, where normal vision is defined as 20/20 and legal blindness is defined as worse than or equal to 20/200 with best correction in the better eye or a visual field extent of less than 20 degrees in diameter. Vision loss can be caused by eye problems that are present from birth, by conditions that appear later in life, or by infections or environmental factors.

Read more at [CNIB's website](#).

Appendix 2: Definitions related to accessibility

Accessibility

Accessibility is the degree to which people with disabilities can take advantage of or use a device, service or environment without barriers. Accessibility is also a process, that is, the proactive identification, removal and prevention of barriers to persons with disabilities.

Accommodation

Accommodation is an individualized and reactive adaptation or adjustment made to give a person with disability equitable and non-discriminatory opportunities for participation. For students with disabilities, accommodation is a collaborative process between the student, the faculty and disability service personnel to identify and remove environmental barriers to learning and performance. Appropriate and reasonable accommodation is determined through an individualized assessment of the interaction between the student's disability and the required tasks. Accommodation is **not** treatment or rehabilitation.

Barrier⁴

A barrier is anything that keeps someone from participating fully in society because of his or her disability. Barriers can be visible or non-visible. Furthermore, even barriers that are created unintentionally, they can and do restrict access to goods and services.

Attitudinal barrier

This barrier is how we think about and interact with persons with disabilities. It is perhaps the most difficult barrier to overcome, because our attitudes – based on our beliefs, knowledge, experience and education – can be hard to change. For instance, some people don't know how to communicate with persons with disabilities; they may assume that someone with a speech problem also has an intellectual disability. Some people worry about offending someone by offering help and deal with this by ignoring or avoiding persons with disabilities.

Architectural or structural barrier

Architectural or structural barriers may result from design elements of a building, such as stairs, doorways, hallway width and room layout. These barriers may also occur through everyday practices, such as when we store boxes or other objects in hallways, obstructing the accessibility of the path.

Information or communication barrier

Information or communication barriers – like small print size, low colour contrast between text and background or not facing the person when speaking – can make it difficult to receive or convey information.

Systemic barrier

Systemic barriers can be described as patterns of behaviour, policies or practices that are part of the structures of an organization, and which create or perpetuate disadvantage for persons with disabilities. For example being requiring full course loads for eligibility for services such as residences, scholarships and honours listings.

⁴ Accessible Customer Service eLearning module [Service excellence includes accessibility](#), Council of Ontario Universities

Technology

Technology, or the lack of it, can prevent people from accessing information. Common tools like computers, telephones and other aids can all present barriers if they are not set up or designed with accessibility in mind.

Disability

Definition used by the Ontario Human Rights Code

The *AODA, 2005* uses the definition of *disability*, which includes physical, mental health, developmental and learning disabilities. A disability may be visible or non-visible, as follows:

- a) Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and (...) includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, 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;
- b) A condition of mental impairment or a development disability;
- c) A learning disability, or dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- d) A mental disorder; or
- e) An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

Definition used by the International Network on the Disability Creation Process⁵

It is the different obstacles or facilitators met in their environment that, in correlation with their own disabilities, will hinder the accomplishment of life habits, compromise everyday life activities and social roles, as well as put them into a full social participation or total disabling situations.

Equal opportunity

Equal opportunity means having the same chances, options, benefits and results as others. For services, it means that persons with disabilities have the same opportunity as others to benefit from the way goods or services are provided.

⁵ Fougeryollas, P., et. al. *The Quebec Classification: Disability Creation Process*. Québec: International Network on Disability Creation Process ([INDCP](#))/CSICIDH, 1998.

Appendix 3: Common myths about disabilities⁶

There are many myths and inaccurate assumptions about disabilities. Here are just a few attitudes that can constitute barriers for persons with disabilities. Have you encountered any of them yourself?

Inferiority

Because a person happens to have an impairment in one of life's major functions, some people believe the individual is a "second-class citizen." However, most persons with disabilities have skills that make the impairment irrelevant.

Pity

People tend to feel sorry for persons with a disability, which usually fosters patronizing attitudes. Persons with disabilities generally don't want pity or charity, just an equal opportunity to succeed on their own and live independently.

Hero worship

People consider someone with a disability who lives independently or pursues studies to be brave or "special" for overcoming a disability. Most persons with disabilities do not want accolades for performing day-to-day tasks. The disability is there, and the person has simply learned to adapt by using his or her skills and knowledge.

Ignorance

People with disabilities are often dismissed as unable to accomplish a task before they even have a chance to display their skills. In fact, persons with quadriplegia can drive cars and have children. People who are blind can tell time on a watch and visit museums. People who are deaf can play baseball and enjoy music. People with intellectual disabilities can be creative and maintain a strong work ethic.

The spread effect

People assume that a person's disability negatively affects other senses, abilities or personality traits, or that the whole person is impaired. For example, many people shout at people who are blind or don't expect people using wheelchairs to be able to speak for themselves. Focusing on the person's abilities rather than on his or her disability counters this type of prejudice.

Stereotypes

The other side of the spread effect is the positive and negative generalizations people form about disabilities. For example, many believe that everyone who is blind is a great musician or has keener senses of smell and hearing; that all people who use wheelchairs are docile or compete in the Paralympics; that everyone with an intellectual disability is innocent and sweet-natured; or that all people with disabilities are sad and bitter. Aside from diminishing the individual and his or her abilities, these assumptions can set too high or too low a standard for individuals who, in the end, are simply human.

⁶ Accessible Customer Service eLearning module [Service excellence includes accessibility](#), Council of Ontario Universities

Backlash

Many people believe that people with disabilities are given unfair advantages, such as easier graduation criteria or work requirements. The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* does not require special privileges for persons with disabilities, just equal opportunities.

Appendix 4: Temporary exemption form

SASS-ACCES/COUNSELLING

TEMPORARY EXEMPTION FORM FOR PERSONAL REASONS

Part 1. TO BE COMPLETED BY STUDENT:

Name: _____

Student number: _____

Faculty / academic unit: _____

I, _____, hereby authorize the undersigned counselor to provide the following information, if required, to supply additional information about my request for temporary exemption.

Request date: _____

Expiry date: _____

Signature: _____

Part 2. TO BE COMPLETED BY THE COUNSELLOR/LEARNING SPECIALIST:

Evaluation: _____

Recommendation: _____

If you have questions about this assessment, please feel free to contact me. Thank you.

Name of the counsellor/learning specialist: _____

Phone: _____

Signature: _____

Name of the supervisor (Access Service) : _____

Signature: _____