



Academic Accommodation and Mount Royal Faculty

In Person & Virtual Course Delivery Handbook

Mount Royal University celebrates diversity and welcomes the contributions, experiences and full participation of students experiencing disabilities as valued members of our community. Higher education is the gateway to the workplace and community for our students; therefore, it is essential that the learning environment at Mount Royal be accessible to all members of the community. Access and Inclusion Services aims to foster diversity, inclusiveness and student success by ensuring that students experiencing disabilities receive equal opportunities for academic success.

June 2023

MOUNT ROYAL UNIVERSITY

Access and Inclusion Services

Mount Royal University is committed to access, diversity, and equity. Access and Inclusion Services assists the University in creating an accessible learning environment that encourages full participation in academic courses for students experiencing a disabling barrier to their learning due to a protected ground.

Reasonable accommodations are tailored to the individual, flexible, and are determined by considering the barriers within the unique environment of a post-secondary institution.

Access and Inclusion Services facilitates reasonable academic accommodations for students experiencing barriers in the academic setting. We encourage student development and partner with MRU faculty to create a more accessible, equitable and inclusive learning environment.

This handbook has been created to help guide faculty with implementing academic accommodations in both the in person and virtual teaching environments.

Academic Accommodations: The Basics	p. 3
Roles & Responsibilities: Who does What?	p. 6
Academic Accommodation Letters	p. 7
Implementing Specific Accommodations	p. 11
Accommodations in the Virtual Teaching & Learning Environment	p. 17
Frequently Asked Questions	p. 18
Supporting Faculty with Accessible Design	p. 23
Communication & Contact	p. 24
Additional Resources for Universal Design for Learning	p. 26

For additional information, please visit the "[Information for Faculty](#)" page on the [Access and Inclusion Services webpage](#)!

Academic Accommodations: The Basics

Types of Disabilities

Students registered with Access and Inclusion Services provide medical or psychological documentation from specialists; that documentation confirms the disability and/or outlines functional limitations associated with the condition. Disability categories include, but are not limited to hearing, vision, mobility, mental health, learning, attention regulation, autism, brain injury, and temporary or short-term impairments such as a broken arm, concussion, or post-surgery limitations.



Students who are registered with Access and Inclusion Services must meet the same admission criteria and academic requirements and standards as all students, although the manner by which they meet those standards may vary.

Academic Accommodations

Academic accommodations are provided when students experience a disabling barrier in demonstrating their knowledge and skills. The accommodations provide equitable access for those students in order for them to have the opportunity to meet the academic standards of their courses and programs.

Students registered with Access and Inclusion Services have the right to utilize their academic accommodations on an as needed basis. For example, some courses may be designed with universal access in mind and therefore, few if any academic accommodations may be required.

Students in professional programs may require unique academic accommodations for field work/practicum placements or other licensing requirements.

Essential Requirements

The provision of accommodations should not change the essential requirements of a course or program curricula.

An appropriate accommodation enables a student to have the opportunity to successfully meet the essential requirements of the program, with no alteration in standards or outcomes, although the manner by which the student demonstrates competency, knowledge and skills may be altered.

Faculty play a key role in the accommodation process by communicating what a student must know and demonstrate. When necessary, faculty assist with problem-solving based on their

academic expertise. The question of fairness often comes up when providing students with alternate ways of performing academic tasks. Accommodations are intended to level the playing field to provide an opportunity for students experiencing disabling barriers due to a protected ground to complete certain tasks differently, while still meeting the essential requirements and components of the curriculum. Students with accommodations are expected to demonstrate the same knowledge and skill development as their peers.

If you believe that the accommodations listed on a student's Academic Accommodation Letter will compromise the academic standards of your course, contact the Access Advisor listed at the bottom of the letter. In some circumstances, the nature and degree of the barriers may mean that no accommodation would enable an individual to meet the essential academic requirements or behavioural expectations of a course or program. In these cases, the University is not required to accommodate. However, efforts must be made to provide all reasonable options.

Mount Royal University has an academic accommodation appeal process outlined in *Policy 517, Student Accommodations Policy*. Faculty who decline to provide an accommodation listed on a student's Academic Accommodation Letter must contact the Access Advisor immediately to discuss the situation. If the appeal goes forward the accommodation remains in place throughout the appeal process. Details regarding the appeal process are available from the student's Access Advisor and in the "[Information for Faculty](#)" section of the Access and Inclusion Services webpage.

Privacy & Confidentiality

A student's specific diagnosis is considered private medical information under Human Rights Legislation. Under no circumstances should you ask a student to disclose this information.

While some students are willing to talk about their disability, many others might be reluctant to do so. They might fear being denied opportunities or creating unwanted curiosity or concern. Encourage students to talk about the impact of their disability on their learning, rather than their diagnosis.

Any category of disability contains a wide range of differences in how someone functions. Knowing a student's diagnosis is not helpful without the more detailed information provided to the Access Advisor during the intake process.

It is important to maintain student confidentiality. Faculty should not discuss a student's accommodations in front of others, nor should they announce that a student in the class is using accommodations (even if the student's name is not mentioned).

Access and Inclusion Services Provides:

- a review of the student's medical documentation and determines the need for and types of academic accommodations
- a place for students to discuss their disabling barriers, reasonable accommodations, and/or referrals to other support services on campus or in the wider community
- the development of an effective academic accommodation plan with the student

- ongoing support and accommodation problem-solving
- information about the Canada Student Grant for Students with Disabilities and referrals to other funding sources
- access to assistive technology and software, and, if required, coordination of specialized services such as sign language interpreting and real-time captioning

Types of Accommodations

Accommodations depend on a student's specific functional limitations within a particular course and/or program of study. Types of accommodations and other supports may include:

Classrooms, labs, and course work

- accessible classrooms and labs that are safe and provide appropriate supports
- sign language interpretation, note taking, audio recording, assisted-hearing devices
- materials in alternate formats (e.g. braille, large print, digitized text)

Tests and exams

- writing within a test/exam space where accommodations can be provided (e.g. fewer distractions, additional time, ability to take breaks or attend to physical needs)
- access to assistive technology and alternate formats such as large print or braille
- adaptable furniture and equipment (e.g. use of keyboard for writing, adjustable-height table, screen-reading software)

Practicum/Clinical placements

- guidance for requesting accommodations during practicum/placement
- development of safe, appropriate accommodations in the academic program and placement site

Other

- liaising with Residence Services regarding disability-related needs
- referring students to campus and community resources
- peer mentoring and educational/support groups (e.g. for students experiencing barriers related to ADHD, mental health, and Autism Spectrum Disorder)
- co-curricular programming in partnership with campus partners (e.g. navigating disability and disclosure in the workplace)

Roles & Responsibilities: Who Does What?



Students, faculty, and the Access and Inclusion Services office all have responsibilities in the accommodation process and in creating an accessible environment. Each party brings an important perspective: the student has a unique and personal knowledge of their barriers; the faculty member has content knowledge and an understanding of the required outcomes; the student's Access Advisor has a broad-based knowledge of disabilities and the impact on academic performance. Roles and responsibilities may differ across academic divisions. Please check for specific procedures.

Faculty

- participates, when necessary, in structuring an accommodation plan that meets the essential requirements of the course/program and needs of the students
- provides accommodations as outlined on the Academic Accommodation Letter, as appropriate, and works with the student and/or Access Advisor to find solutions if issues arise
- directs students to register with Access and Inclusion Services if an accommodation request is made but is not accompanied by an Academic Accommodation Letter
- makes every effort to develop an inclusive learning environment (e.g., provides clear information in the course syllabus and course policies regarding accommodations)

Student

- registers with Access and Inclusion Services once the need for academic accommodation has been determined (as soon as possible)
- provides appropriate and timely medical or other protected grounds documentation to Access and Inclusion Services verifying the need for academic accommodation and outlining the restrictions and limitations of functioning within an academic environment
- informs faculty about the need for accommodation by providing an Academic Accommodation Letter for each course for which accommodation is being requested
- fulfills agreed upon procedures to implement their accommodations

Access Advisor

- receives medical documentation from a qualified medical practitioner confirming a

- disability and/or the student's functional limitations within the academic environment
- verifies that there is a need for accommodation, based on a protected ground, within a particular learning environment (e.g. classroom, lab, practicum setting)
- uses best practices, input from the student and the medical documentation to develop accommodations
- supports the facilitation of the accommodation process between the student and faculty member
- works collaboratively with others in the MRU community to develop an accessible environment for all students

Academic Accommodation Letters

How are academic accommodations determined?

Students provide documentation for disability related accommodations from qualified medical professionals confirming a disability and/or functional limitations that require academic accommodations. Access Advisors review the medical documentation and meet with students to discuss barriers and to determine appropriate and reasonable academic accommodations. In certain situations, the Access Advisor will consult with the academic program. Students requiring accommodations based on other protected grounds will need to complete and submit the appropriate form available on the [Access and Inclusion Services](#) webpage.

What is an Academic Accommodation Letter?

Faculty members will receive an Academic Accommodation Letter directly from the student, typically via email, although they may choose to provide a paper copy. The Academic Accommodation Letter indicates that the student has registered with Access and Inclusion Services and that they wish to use their academic accommodations in that specific course. The letter indicates the student's name and MRU ID number, the semester for which the accommodations are valid, and the recommended academic accommodations. The letter also lists the name and contact information of the student's Access Advisor. Faculty members are encouraged to contact the Access Advisor if they have questions or concerns about implementing the recommended accommodations

The accommodations listed on the letter are generic and may not apply to all courses. For example, "use of a basic calculator" would not be needed in an English course. Communication must be had between the faculty member and the student to determine how the student's accommodations will be applied to the design of the course. The communication may take place in-person or virtually (e.g., email, telephone, Google Meet).

Please contact the Access Advisor listed at the bottom of the letter if you have questions or concerns about implementing the recommended accommodations.

Students must provide their Academic Accommodation Letter to their faculty member(s) in order to access their classroom accommodations and a minimum of seven days before testing accommodations must be applied. Students wanting to use exam accommodations during the final exam period need to provide their Academic Accommodation Letter no later than the deadline indicated by Access and Inclusion Services each semester.

Acknowledging a Student's Accommodations

The duty to accommodate begins upon faculty receipt of the student's Academic Accommodation Letter (in-person or via email). It is the responsibility of the faculty member and the student to communicate about how the recommended accommodation(s) will fit with the course components being assessed. Once that communication has taken place, the faculty member must "reply all" to the student's initial email and copy accessibility@mtroyal.ca stating that they have had communication with the student and they acknowledge the student's accommodations. If the student provided the letter in-person, the faculty member should email accessibility@mtroyal.ca to indicate their acknowledgement of the student's academic accommodations.

*Please note that sending an email to Access and Inclusion Services with your acknowledgement of the student's accommodations is in lieu of signing the Faculty Acknowledgement Form. Paper Faculty Acknowledgement Forms are no longer being used.

Why don't some students provide their Academic Accommodation Letter at the beginning of the semester?

The need for academic accommodations can arise at any time. As such, registration with Access and Inclusion Services continues throughout the year.

Some students try to complete their academic work without accommodations until they realize that they are unable to do so. Other students fear the stigma of being known as a student experiencing a disability. Further, students may have been newly diagnosed or have had to wait to obtain appropriate medical documentation.

Am I required to accommodate a student's request?

When Access and Inclusion Services has determined a need for academic accommodation, the student must be accommodated to the point of undue hardship. Undue hardship consists of safety to self or others, the preservation of the essential course requirements, and the cost of the accommodation to the institution. Academic accommodations should reasonably reflect what is specified on the official Academic Accommodation Letter.

There is no expectation or obligation to provide accommodations beyond what is included on the Academic Accommodation Letter. Faculty have the right to provide accommodations

as they wish. If a student requests an academic accommodation that is not previously identified faculty may contact the Access Advisor to discuss the request or refer the student to their Access Advisor.

What if I disagree with the recommended accommodations?

Access Advisors support both faculty and students in facilitating the academic accommodation process. If you have questions about the accommodations recommended for a student, contact their Access Advisor. Such discussions can be very useful for clarifying misunderstandings and reaching mutually acceptable solutions.

Sample Academic Accommodation Letter (see next page):



CONFIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION LETTER

June 6, 2023

Dear Faculty Member,

Re: (Student Name) 201XXXXXX

It is the responsibility of the faculty member and the student to communicate about how these accommodations will fit with the design of the course.

Following this communication, it is the responsibility of the faculty member to email accessibility@mtroyal.ca stating that communication with the student has taken place and that you acknowledge their accommodations. Please include the name of the student and the course code.

Semester: Spring 2023

Based on documentation of disability and/or other protected grounds as listed in the Alberta Human Rights Act, the following general academic accommodations are recommended. The duty to accommodate begins with the receipt of this letter.

- **Classroom Accommodations/Professor's class notes and Power Points Faculty member and student to discuss possible ways in which the student can obtain class notes/lecture outline/power points (e.g., posting on D2L, email, providing a hard copy). Note: Faculty member is not expected to provide a copy of their personal teaching notes, and the student is expected to attend class.**
- **Testing Accommodations/Extended Time: 1.5 times regular time (for quizzes, tests, midterms, and final exams) Note: extra time does not apply to take-home exams (where students have several days to complete)**
- **Testing Accommodations/Plain Desk Room**
- **Classroom Accommodations/Recording of classes The student is responsible for ensuring they have a personal recording device**

Students who require Recording of Course Materials or Class Notes, Overheads, and Power Points as an academic accommodation are required to sign an agreement, retained in Access and Inclusion Services, not to copy, share, or redistribute the materials in any form, to any person.

Please contact me should you have any questions or concerns.

(Name of student's Access Advisor and contact information)

Implementing Specific Accommodations

A student's Academic Accommodation Letter is not customized to each and every course that they are taking. When students register with Access and Inclusion Services a list of recommended accommodations is included on the Academic Accommodation Letter to ensure that the student will be supported regardless of the unique demands and expectations of each course. It is possible that not all of the recommended accommodations will apply in every course. For instance, a student will not need to use their accommodation of a basic calculator if the course does not require students to complete math calculations. In other cases, some of the recommended accommodations may not apply (or may look different) in the virtual teaching and learning environment.

Below are guidelines for applying certain accommodations in the in person and virtual teaching and learning environments. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of possible accommodations. Faculty members are encouraged to contact the Access Advisor listed on the bottom of the student's Academic Accommodation Letter should further information and/or clarification be required.

Extended time for quizzes, tests, midterms, and final exams

Test and exam accommodations are frequently required, and faculty members are responsible for keeping track of the students in their course(s) who require exam accommodations. Students must register with Access and Inclusion Services to write an exam in the Accommodated Exam Centre (located in Y201).

Paper Exams (In Person/On campus courses)

When a student submits a request to write an exam in Y201, you will receive notifications about the accommodated exam seating. **Please review the information for accuracy** and respond to the notifications providing any clarification about the test /exam or seating time.

You will be asked to upload a copy of the test or exam to Access and Inclusion Services using your secure faculty portal in Accommodate (the database used by Access and Inclusion Services).

Important! Please ensure that you have provided your exam before the deadline specified by Access and Inclusion Services. **Late exam submissions will result in the student's exam being rescheduled.**



Do you have questions about uploading your exam into Accommodate?

Please see the **Faculty Guide to Accommodate** in the "[Information for Faculty](#)" section of our webpage!

Online Exams (In Person/Online courses)

If you are teaching an online course or providing online exams for in person courses, students with academic accommodations are still entitled to their exam accommodations.

Accommodated students are to have access to the same opportunities their classmates receive when writing an exam (e.g. if the class is writing at home, accommodated students can write from home. If the class can move back and forth on a D2L exam, accommodated students must be able to move back and forth as well.

Faculty are responsible for adjusting online exam settings for students with academic accommodations (e.g. extended time – 1.5x or 2x regular time) regardless of whether students are permitted to write at home or are writing in the Accommodated Exam Centre.

Important! If the student is writing an online exam in the Exam Centre, it is crucial that you respond to your exam notification and indicate that the student will require the use of a computer so that they can access the online exam.



Incorporating Universal Design for Learning into your exams...

The purpose of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is to allow for equitable access to course content and the learning environment for all students no matter what barriers they experience. Faculty members are encouraged to implement UDL wherever possible.

When using UDL for exams, the following applies:

- if double (2x) is being provided to all students, students with an extended time accommodation would not receive additional time since double time is the maximum accommodation allowed.
- if 1.5x regular time is being provided to all students, students with an accommodation of 2x regular time would need to be provided with an additional .5x extension.

Assistive Technology

An Assistive Technology Advisor (ATA) in Access and Inclusion Services is available for any student who has one or more assistive technologies listed as an academic accommodation. The ATA is available to work with students to ensure they have access to and an understanding of the required assistive technology including all software/programs.

If a student contacts you with questions about their assistive technology accommodation, please refer them to their Assistive Technology Advisor directly (or email the main office: accessibility@mtroyal.ca).

Examples of Assistive Technology that may be listed on a student's Academic Accommodation Letter include, but are not limited to:

- Text-to-speech software (reads words on the screen aloud)
- Dictation software (in [Google Docs](#) or [MS Word](#))
- ZoomText software (magnifies and reads the screen aloud)
- JAWS software (screen reader for individuals who experience vision impairment)

Audio Recording & Access to Class Notes

Many students who experience disability-related barriers require more time to read, process, and comprehend new information. Also, many students need assistance getting spoken lecture material into print, to view it later in a format that is accessible to them. Audio recording lectures and having access to class notes are important accommodations to help students obtain and review the information that they need to be successful in their courses.

Faculty members who want to incorporate Universal Design for Learning can consider making class notes and PowerPoint slides available to all students in advance of the lecture. Consideration can also be given to using asynchronous lectures and/or audio recording real-time lectures. These actions will allow all students to access and review the information as many times as they require.

If you decide to audio record real-time lectures through Google Meet and make the recordings available to all students, it has been suggested by the MRU Legal department and the Copyright Advisor that the following be indicated in your syllabus:

Notice of Recording

Mount Royal University has contracted Google to provide educational technology software for the course [Course Number]; where, the instructor will record lectures using Google Meet and make them available to registered students on D2L until 10 days after the course is completed. Users, including any recorded student participants, are advised that the personal information collected during the recordings will only be used for educational purposes and is collected under the authority of the FOIP Act – section 33(c) and the Post-Secondary Learning Act in the Province of Alberta.

Users are further advised that the downloading of posted videos other than for the purposes of student personal learning through D2L, may violate the copyright of the course instructor or others.

For additional questions regarding the collection, use, disclosure and protection of personal information please contact: [INSERT INFO OF DEPARTMENT'S FOIP CONTACT] [Title - Business Unit - 4825 Mount Royal Gate SW - Calgary, AB - T3E 6K6 - PHONE – EMAIL]

Should you choose not to audio record and/or to provide class notes for all students, the following information applies to students who require those specific academic accommodations:

- Access to class notes as an accommodation:
The faculty member and the student will need to discuss the way in which the student can obtain the class notes/lecture outline/power points (e.g., will they be posted on D2L, emailed, etc.). Please note that the faculty member is not expected to provide a copy of their personal teaching notes, and the student is expected to attend all classes for which they are receiving class notes.
- Audio recording as an accommodation:
Should the faculty member choose to not audio record real-time lectures for all students, it is important to be aware that students with audio recording on their Academic Accommodation Letter are able to record the lecture using a personal recording device (e.g., phone, digital recorder, laptop. Students are not permitted to record on their own through Google Meet).

When a student is audio recording the class as an academic accommodation, other students in the class should not be told that audio recording is taking place, even if the student who is using the academic accommodation is not named.



All students who are registered with Access and Inclusion Services must sign the MRU Access and Inclusion Services Service Agreement to access academic accommodations. The agreement states the following:

Students who require recording of course materials, or a copy of class notes, overheads, and PowerPoint presentations, as an Academic Accommodation:

- I understand that any course notes, audio recording or transcription of course material is for my own personal use
- I agree not to copy, share, or redistribute these materials in any form to any person
- Failure to comply with this agreement may be considered misconduct
- I agree to destroy the course notes, audio recordings or transcriptions at the end of the semester in which the course is taken, unless the materials are otherwise required for further study while registered at Mount Royal University, in which case I will destroy the materials at the termination of registration.

For more information about audio recording as an accommodation, privacy, and copyright, faculty members are invited to visit the "[Information for Faculty](#)" section on the MRU Access and Inclusion Services webpage.

Assignment Extensions

Access and Inclusion Services offers Academic Strategist support to students who experience barriers related to planning, organization, time-management, and assignment completion; however, some students may still occasionally require assignment extensions. Some students experience barriers that are unpredictable or can become “flared” or exacerbated.

Access and Inclusion Services does not provide guidelines regarding assignment extensions. Faculty members and students must discuss reasonable extension parameters in advance of assignment deadlines (e.g., implementation of the request, length of the extension, etc.). Requesting an assignment extension after the assignment deadline has passed is not considered a reasonable accommodation.

Work with the student to find an appropriate date to complete the assignment, being mindful of the University’s deadlines and policies. Usually, students are granted a short extension beyond the deadline, or if at the end of the semester faculty may consider an ‘I’ grade.

Alternatives to Class Participation

Clarify how participation may be an essential academic requirement of your course (e.g. language learning courses) and work with the student to determine viable alternatives early in the semester to prevent misunderstandings. Consider writing the terms of the agreement on the back side of the student’s Academic Accommodation Letter and having both parties sign/date the additional information. Contact the Access Advisor to discuss options if needed.

Alternatives to Presentations

Students with certain barriers may be unable to deliver in person, face-to-face presentations. However, delivering a presentation through other means may be a possibility, and options should be discussed between the faculty member and the student (e.g., one-on-one presentation to the faculty member, pre-recorded presentation). If conducting a presentation in any format is not possible due to the student’s disability-related barriers, the faculty member and student can discuss alternative ways for the student to demonstrate their knowledge based on the design of the course (e.g., alternative paper or assignment).

Alternatives to Group Work

Students who have this accommodation are typically unable to take part in “traditional” groupwork. However, there may be some ways in which the student can participate in a group through virtual or others means (e.g., conduct research, type group responses to questions, etc.). Should the student not be able to work with others in any capacity, the faculty member and student can discuss alternative ways for the student to participate and demonstrate their knowledge (e.g., completing an

assignment alone, completing an alternative paper or assignment, etc.).

Adjustment to Attendance Policy

There is an expectation that students will attend most classes; however, this accommodation informs you that the student may need to occasionally miss class for reasons related to their documented disability or other protected ground. This accommodation is not required for online classes taking place in an asynchronous format as any student would have access to the information at any time.

Contact the Access Advisor if you need assistance in establishing reasonable expectations for attendance.

Memory Aid/Cue Sheet

These requests will be outlined in the student's Academic Accommodation Letter and follow stringent criteria. Students requesting a memory aid sheet must have it approved by the faculty member prior to the test/exam. Review the memory aid sheet and either approve it or ask for revisions from the student. An information sheet regarding the use of memory aids/cue sheets is available from Access and Inclusion Services. If there are issues or concerns, you or the student can contact the Access Advisor.

Computer/Laptop/Mobile Device in the Classroom

Laptops are an effective learning tool and it is appropriate for faculty to create clear messages about the use of laptops in the classroom. For some students, laptops are essential. Allowing the use of an assistive device (e.g. laptop or tablet) can support learning and bypass disability-related challenges to note taking.

Banning laptops for all students except those registered with Access and Inclusion Services is discouraged because it breaks the confidentiality of students registered with the office. Some faculty establish laptop-free zones in certain sections of their classroom to minimize disruption and distraction.

Accommodations in the Virtual Teaching and Learning Environment

Are there any accommodations that do not apply to the virtual teaching and learning environment?

The ways in which accommodations are applied depends on the specific learning environment. Most accommodations that are applied to in-person classes are also applicable to online/virtual classes. With that said, it is possible that some accommodations may look different or may not be needed in the virtual teaching and learning environment. It should also be kept in mind that a student's Academic Accommodation Letter is not tailored specifically for the virtual environment. Therefore, it is important for the faculty member and student to communicate about whether all of the accommodations listed on the Academic Accommodation Letter are application and/or required for that particular course.

ACCOMMODATIONS NOT APPLICABLE IN THE VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT

Some accommodations that may be listed on a student's Academic Accommodation Letter that will not be applicable in the virtual teaching and learning environment are listed below. Such accommodations are not applicable because they are specific to the on-campus learning environment.

- Preferential seating
- Computer/tablet/mobile device for notetaking and/or in-class assignments
- Type of exam room (e.g., Isolation room, Test room with technology)
 - For online courses many accommodated students choose to write their exams at home just as the other students in the class. However, accommodated students may choose to write their online exam on campus in the Accommodated Exam Centre and in such cases Access and Inclusion Services will ensure that the student is assigned to the appropriate type of exam room.

ACCOMMODATIONS THAT ARE REQUIRED, BUT ACCESSIBLE TO ALL STUDENTS

Accommodations may be required to provide a student with an equitable learning opportunity; however, it can reasonably be assumed that all students in the online class would have access to such resources while learning virtually.

- Computer – WordPad or Grammar and Spell Check
- Use of a Basic Calculator
- Use of a Memory Aid
- Listen to commercially recorded CD

Frequently Asked Questions

STUDENT REFERRALS

- [What should I do if I think a student is experiencing a disability-related barrier?](#)
- [What should I do if a student discloses their disability to me?](#)
- [What if I have general inquiries and/or questions about current process and procedures?](#)

STUDENT CONFIDENTIALITY

- [What information can I share about a student's needs with other students, faculty, or support staff?](#)

SHORT-TERM ILLNESS

- [What should I do if I get a limited illness medical note?](#)

EVALUATION & ASSESSMENT

- [What if a student provides their academic accommodation letter in short notice of an upcoming exam?](#)
- [What is the maximum number of hours for a student to write accommodated exams within the same calendar day, and what is my role if a student asks for their exam to be moved to a different day?](#)
- [Why do some students require extended time?](#)
- [What do I do if a student registered with Access and Inclusion Services is not meeting academic expectations?](#)

COURSE DESIGN & PLANNING

- [What can I communicate about academic accommodations in my course outline?](#)
- [How do I implement accommodations in a practicum setting?](#)

STUDENT REFERRALS

Q: What should I do if I think a student is experiencing a disability-related barrier?

Please invite the student to review on-campus services and to choose a support office/contact to begin a discussion about their concerns. For example, the student may want to book time with Student Learning Services or a Doctor or Counsellor at Wellness Services. Consult the Student Services & Support page on the MRU website:

<https://www.mtroyal.ca/AcademicSupport/>

Access and Inclusion Services meets with students who are referred to our department from any of the student support services on campus.

Q: What should I do if a student discloses their disability to me?

If a student discloses their disability/medical condition to you, this suggests that the student is experiencing enough challenges that they feel the need to seek help. It is reasonable for you to ask the student if they have accessed any of the on-campus services for support.

If the student does not mention Access and Inclusion Services, you can encourage them to contact the office to find out if they may be eligible for specific supports or accommodations.

If the student indicates that they have already registered with Access and Inclusion Services, encourage the student to contact their Access Advisor. If appropriate, you can also offer to contact the Access Advisor directly in order to address an ongoing situation in the classroom. The student, faculty member and Access Advisor may then collaborate to determine reasonable solutions.

If the student is not interested in working with Access and Inclusion Services (not all students experiencing disabilities are registered with Access and Inclusion Services), it is reasonable to encourage them to access other campus services. Disability-related accommodations (ongoing or temporary) are not provided unless the student registers with Access and Inclusion Services and provides the necessary medical documentation.

Q: What if I have general inquires and/or questions about current process and procedures?

Faculty members are encouraged to send their inquiry/request to the main Access and Inclusion Services email at accessibility@mtroyal.ca

STUDENT CONFIDENTIALITY

Q: What information can I share about a student's needs with other students, faculty, or support staff?

Always maintain the confidentiality of a student's registration with Access and Inclusion

Services. There may be times when you need to communicate information about a student's accommodations to other staff involved in teaching the course, such as a lab assistant. Share information on a need-to-know basis and preserve the student's private information. When it comes to making decisions regarding accommodations, outline responsibilities for yourself and all course support staff.

Important! Other students in the class should not be told that a student is using academic accommodations, even if that student's name is not disclosed.

SHORT-TERM ILLNESS

Q: What should I do if I get a limited illness medical note?

Medical notes may be provided to faculty by students experiencing a time-limited medical condition. If a student has an illness unrelated to their permanent disability (e.g. they get the flu or COVID-19), a medical note for the flu or COVID-19 is appropriate. Each academic area has its own policies and processes regarding accommodation for short-term illness or injury. Please consult your division for detailed information.

Access and Inclusion Services does not provide academic accommodations to students who are experiencing a short-term illness (e.g., the flu or COVID-19); however, if the illness results in the student experiencing an ongoing or chronic condition, they may be referred to our office for support.

EVALUATION & ASSESSMENT

Q: What if a student provides their Academic Accommodation Letter in short notice of an upcoming exam?

Students are required to provide their Academic Accommodation Letter to their faculty members a minimum of seven days in advance of a quiz, test, or midterm exam. Students wanting to use exam accommodations during the final exam period need to provide their Academic Accommodation Letter no later than the deadline indicated by Access and Inclusion Services each semester.

For online exams that are being completed in a virtual location (not being written in the accommodated Exam Centre), the faculty member may apply the student's exam accommodations (e.g., extended time) to an upcoming exam with shorter notice, at their own discretion. Last-minute requests for exam accommodations (e.g., the day before) are not considered reasonable.

Q: What is the maximum number of hours for a student to write accommodated exams within the same calendar day, and what is my role if a student asks for their exam to be moved to a different day?

As outlined in the [MRU Examinations Policy](#) (effective September 1, 2022):

Academic Accommodation: Students with documented disability or under other protected grounds (e.g., religion, family status) may have exam accommodations, as outlined by the Academic Accommodation for Students Experiencing Disabilities Policy:

- i. It is the student's responsibility to request an examination accommodation through Access and Inclusion Services and provide the necessary documentation to support their request. Access and Inclusion Services will work with faculty and students to achieve accommodations that uphold academic standards and maintain the integrity of the course curriculum.
- ii. The maximum number of hours for a student to write exams in one calendar day is 6 hours. There may be exceptions if the duration of the exam is determined by accrediting bodies.
 - If a student has multiple exams scheduled on the same day and the total writing time exceeds 6 hours, the student may choose to defer one or more exam(s).
 - If the student chooses to defer an exam due to multiple exams in one day, the second exam would be deferred.
 - Students with back to back exams where the extended time applied overlaps with the second exam, the second exam would be deferred.

Q: Why do some students require extended time for exams?

Students experiencing disabilities often need more time to process the information required for learning or communicating knowledge due to neurological differences, chronic health issues that limit focus and concentration, or physical disabilities that require the use of assistive technology.

Q: What do I do if a student registered with Access and Inclusion Services is not meeting academic expectations?

Contact the student's Access Advisor if the student is in academic jeopardy as this may indicate that their accommodations need to be adjusted. It is possible that accommodations may not alleviate the student's difficulties and they fail the class.

DESIGN & PLANNING

Q: What can I communicate about academic accommodations in my course outline?

In your syllabus, clearly state the knowledge and skills students need to know and demonstrate in your course. Include a section addressing academic accommodation, which will signal your openness to discuss student needs. A sample statement for your syllabus can be found in the "[Information for Faculty](#)" section on the Access and Inclusion Services webpage.

Q: How do I implement accommodations in a practicum setting?

Students may require accommodation in clinical placements, internships, cooperative placements, practicum placements and other experiential learning courses.

Supports that have been suited to the classroom environment do not necessarily transfer to the placement environment, and therefore, **the student should provide you with a specific Practicum Accommodation Letter.**

Contact the Access Advisor to find a solution if what is being suggested will not work within your practicum/clinical setting or could compromise the health and safety of clients, essential requirements, or requisite licensing processes.

Supporting Faculty with Accessible Design

Universal Design for Learning is a framework that guides the planning and design of learning and learning environments. Three guiding principles: representation, action and expression, and engagement allows for equitable access to course content and the learning environment for all learners.

Consider implementing basic Universal Design for Learning principles to make your course accessible for a wide variety of learners. Many of the principles can be considered beneficial to any student. The idea of “Universal Design for Learning” is a method of designing course materials, content and instruction to benefit all learners.

Create learning environments in which students feel free to ask questions and discuss/apply the material to help them integrate their learning.

Consider these 10 tips:

- Ensure your syllabus clearly articulates the essential course requirements and includes an accessibility statement.
- Provide handouts (e.g. PowerPoint slides) and any other course information ahead of time and in electronic formats to assist students in preparing for and following the lecture.
- Include the equivalent text alternative (alt text) for all graphics and images.
- Use captioned or subtitled video and transcribed audio, where possible.
- Use Ally for D2L to analyze your course content and follow the advice to make your course more accessible.
- Use colour effectively by providing crisp, high-contrast handouts.
- Avoid using animated, flickering or flashing content.
- Use a font that is a sufficient size (i.e., 12 point or larger) and a readable style (e.g. sans serif typefaces such as Arial or Calibri).
- Repeat student questions and comments out loud to help students follow the discussion.
- Request electronic versions of textbooks when ordering.
- If you have a course webpage make sure that it meets the WCAG 2.0 website guidelines: <https://www.w3.org/WAI/fundamentals/accessibility-intro/>



MRU's **Academic Development Centre (ADC)** can assist with implementing Universal Design for Learning principles within your courses. Various resources and workshops are available.

Communication & Contact

Registering with Access and Inclusion Services

Students complete and submit the Public Request Form on our webpage and upload their documentation of disability or other protected ground:

<https://www.mtroyal.ca/AcademicSupport/ResourcesServices/AccessibilityServices/index.htm>

Conversations with Students

Communication between the faculty member and student is required. Communicate privately with the student in-person or virtually (e.g., email, telephone, Google Meet)

- Be straightforward and factual in your approach.
- Outline what you have observed and describe the services available.
- Allow time for the student to think about what you have said.
- Recognize that the student may not know that support for functional limitations within the Canadian context is legally mandated.
- If you think a student may not understand what you are saying, summarize your points in written form.
- Allow time and space for the student to ask questions and to clarify what it is they need to know.



Language plays a powerful and important role in shaping ideas and perceptions. Sensitivity in how we present information relating to people experiencing disabilities can go a long way in overcoming the most difficult barrier to full integration and accepting attitudes. For suggestions on how to speak with people experiencing disabilities, chat with an Access Advisor.

Responding to Students in Distress

Faculty play an important role in recognizing a student in distress and supporting student wellness. If any student in your class is displaying concerning behaviour, please encourage the student to seek appropriate supports on campus (e.g., Student Counselling, Health Services). You may also wish to refer the student to the MRU Early Support program through the Office of Student Experience. If the student is registered with Access and Inclusion Services, you may wish to inform the student's Access Advisor of your observations so that the Access Advisor can follow-up with the student.

EMERGENCY

Follow the MRU protocol:
Security: 403-440-5900

NON-EMERGENCY

Office of Student Experience: 403-440-6544
Student Counselling: 403-440-6362

Contact Access and Inclusion Services

Location: Y201

Admin/Exam Team: 403-440-6868

Email: accessibility@mtroyal.ca

Fax: 403-440-7255

Website: mru.ca/accessandinclusion

Additional Resources for UDL

The following Universal Design for Learning resources have been grouped into sections on Books and Websites, under each reference is an indicator as to whether the information addresses such topics as Universal Instructional Design (UID), Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and/or the level of education the article(s) addresses (e.g., secondary, post-secondary), etc.

More information can be found on the Access and Inclusion Services webpage:

<https://www.mtroyal.ca/AcademicSupport/ResourcesServices/AccessibilityServices/universal-design-for-learning.htm>

Books

Bowe, F. (2000). *Universal Design in Education*. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.

- UID, K-12, post-secondary, continuing education

Burgstahler, Sheryl E., & Cory, Rebecca C. (Eds.). (2010). *Universal design in higher education*.

- UID, UDL, higher education

Meyer, A., Rose, D.H., & Gordon, D. (2014). *Universal design for learning: Theory and Practice*. Wakefield, MA: CAST Professional Publishing.

- UDL, Guidelines, examples

Thomas, C. A., Bartholomew, C. C., Scott, L. A. (2009). *Universal design for transition: A roadmap for planning and instruction*. Baltimore, Maryland: Paul H. Brooks.

- UID for transition, secondary

Websites

ACCESS to Post-secondary Education through Universal Design for Learning

http://accessproject.colostate.edu/udl/documents/udl_quick_tips.pdf

- UDL, post-secondary, Quick Tips graphic

ACCESS How Do You Teach: A UDL Checklist

http://accessproject.colostate.edu/udl/documents/how_do_you_teach_checklist.pdf

- UDL, post-secondary, checklist

Alberta Human Rights Commission. (2010, September). Interpretive Bulletin: Duty to accommodate students with disabilities in post-secondary educational institutions. Retrieved from

http://www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca/publications/bulletins_sheets_booklets/bulletins/duty_to_accommodate_students.asp

- Legal responsibilities and principles, BFER's

CAST (2011). *Universal Design for Learning Guidelines version 2.0*. Wakefield, MA: Author.

<http://www.udlcenter.org/aboutudl/udlguidelines/downloads>

- Background, guidelines, checklist, technology

CAST [UDL in Higher Ed](#)

- Curriculum design guide, examples, resources

CAST Toolkit <http://udl-toolkit.cast.org/home>

- Open source software for UDL web-based course curricula and content development

Roberts, B. (2014, December 8). Accommodation vs. Accessibility: A Proactive Approach. [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DwxWmTgDNnw>

- UDL, post-secondary

University of Guelph UID Homepage

<http://opened.uoguelph.ca/en/students/universal-instructional-design.asp>

- UD, UID, post-secondary

University of Guelph Accessible Instruction

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/diversity-human-rights/accessibility/accessible-instruction-resources>

- UID, post-secondary, tip sheets, Educator's Toolkit, UID e-module for educators

University of Guelph Quick Start Implementation Checklist

<http://opened.uoguelph.ca/en/students/resources/uidquickstart-implement.pdf>

- UID, post-secondary, implementation checklist

University of Guelph Faculty Workbook – Face to Face Classes

<http://opened.uoguelph.ca/en/students/resources/uid-workbook-FTF.pdf>

- UID, post-secondary, faculty workbook classroom teaching

University of Guelph Faculty Workbook – Teaching at a Distance

<http://opened.uoguelph.ca/en/students/resources/uid-workbook-DE.pdf>

- UID, post-secondary, workbook for distance education