

Procedure Title:	Accommodations for Students with Accessibility Needs Procedure
Procedure Number:	2020
Sponsor:	Vice President, Academic
Contact:	Manager, Student Experience
Approved by:	Academic Council
Date:	February 16, 2024
Next Review Date:	February 16, 2026

1. Purpose

This Procedure (the "Procedure") is designated to support the Accommodation for Students with Accessibility Needs Policy (the "**Policy**"). It describes the process whereby eligible Students may request Accommodations at the University.

2. Process for Requesting Academic Accommodation(s)

Students with a documented disability or persistent or prolonged condition who seek academic accommodation(s) must:

- register with the Student Experience Manager.
- book an appointment with the Student Experience Manager as early as possible, as early identification is necessary to identify and implement appropriate academic accommodation(s) in a timely manner. The required time to plan, develop, and implement academic accommodations depends on the nature and uniqueness of the accommodation the student is seeking.
- provide appropriate official documentation outlining the restrictions and functional limitations of the disability or persistent or prolonged condition to the Student Experience Manager (see section 4 of this Procedure);

In consultation with the student and in a timely manner, the Student Experience Manager will:

- collect, review and manage all official documentation and relevant information provided by the student;
- gather and review student self-report (as shared during the intake appointment and subsequent communication);
- review program and course essential learning requirements;
- request additional information or documentation, as needed;
- determine appropriate options for academic accommodation;
- inform student that academic accommodations provided are intended to remove barriers and provide access. They do not guarantee academic success.
- provide interim academic accommodation(s) on a case-by-case basis as deemed appropriate;

3. Accommodation Implementation

Upon confirmation of the academic accommodation plan with the student, the Student Experience Manager will generate the Accommodation Letter (the “Letter”);

The Letter will be sent by email to only those parties (e.g., Associate Dean, unit or department head) necessary for the implementation and provision of the accommodation. The Associate Dean, unit or department head is responsible for implementing the plan.

The Student Experience Manager is responsible for coordinating any support services to be provided for academic accommodations where those services cannot reasonably be provided at the program level.

The Academic Accommodation plan takes effect when:

- it has been agreed to by the student and the Student Experience Manager;
- applicable staff and faculty receive the Letter.

Upon receipt of the Letter, should applicable staff and faculty have concerns or questions relating to the implementation of the academic accommodation(s) or impact on the essential requirements of the course or program, they are to consult with the Student Experience Manager as soon as possible;

An existing academic accommodation plan may be amended, where appropriate, by the Student Experience Manager in consultation with relevant parties.

4. Documentation

Acceptable documentation must be current within three years and relevant to the nature of the disability or persistent or prolonged condition. Documentation must outline the functional impact with respect to their learning environment, and it must be completed by a licensed healthcare professional, who has specific training, expertise, and experience in the diagnosis of conditions for which accommodation is being requested. Documentation must include the qualified health professional's signature, credentials, license, and registration number.

Documentation must include sufficient information to allow the Student Experience Manager to determine eligibility for academic accommodations. If a student makes a request for accommodation without providing sufficient supporting documentation, the Student Experience Manager may require the student to provide additional documentation. To support the provision of comprehensive and sufficient documentation, the UNF Student Supporting Documentation for Academic Accommodations Form can be provided to their registered healthcare provider.

If a student submits documentation relating to their disability or persistent or prolonged condition that was issued outside of Canada, the student must provide a notarized copy of the documentation in English.

Requests for academic accommodations typically will not be processed until sufficient documentation is provided to the Student Experience Manager. Depending on the nature of a disability or persistent or prolonged condition, a student may not be able to request academic accommodation(s) in a timely manner to formalize academic accommodation plans. Interim academic accommodation(s) may be explored under extenuating circumstances.

Students are not required to disclose their diagnosis in their documentation.

When a student's functional abilities have shown significant change since the documentation was submitted (i.e., an improvement or deterioration of status has taken place or is expected to take place) or when the student's request(s) for academic accommodation(s) have changed substantially over the course of their studies, new or updated information may be requested by the Student Experience Manager.

5. Accommodation Letter

The Letter specifies only the student's approved academic accommodation(s) and not their diagnosis. Information about a student's diagnosis provided to the Student Experience Manager will be kept confidential and shared only on a need-to-know basis or with the student's consent.

The contents of the Letter are confidential and are not to be shared with others.

The Letter is considered an official student record. A copy is shared with the Registrar.

At the beginning of each new term or otherwise at the earliest available opportunity, the student must request their Letter from the Student Experience Manager.

6. Confidentiality

The University is committed to keeping the information and documentation of students confidential, pursuant to Ontario's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

The student's documentation provided under this Policy and Procedure is strictly confidential and is kept secure with the Registrar.

By requesting academic accommodation(s) at the University of Niagara Falls Canada, the student understands and allows the Student Experience Manager to disclose information necessary to ensure academic accommodation(s) under this Policy and Procedure.

7. Appeals Pertaining to Academic Accommodation(s)

If students have concerns about the decision, adequacy or provision of academic accommodation(s), students are encouraged to informally resolve any concerns with the Student Success Department. The Student Experience Manager will review and attempt to resolve the student's concerns, together with the Associate Dean, faculty, or members of an academic program or department head or other department/unit, as appropriate.

Appeals with respect to academic accommodation(s) must be submitted in writing and based on any or all the grounds described below:

- **Insufficient and/or inadequate accommodations:** the student wishes to appeal as they have identified the recommended academic accommodation(s) are not reasonably meeting the student's needs or the student has new information relevant to the request for accommodation that was not reasonably available to the Student Experience Manager at the time of the original decision;
- **Procedural error:** the student wishes to appeal based on procedural errors, such as failure to follow established policies or procedures that have negatively impacted the result of the accommodation;
- **Issues of bias:** the student wishes to appeal based on concerns related to stereotyping and prejudice, negative attitudes, and lack of access to accommodations.

The Student Experience Manager will attempt to reach a consensus on academic accommodation between the student, faculty member, and/or department lead. If a resolution through informal discussion cannot be reached, the student may submit a formal appeal in writing to the Provost & Vice-President, Academic within 10 calendar days of the student receiving the academic accommodation decision or of the student becoming aware of a deficiency in the implementation of an accommodation. The student must complete the Academic Accommodation Appeal Form, including the following information:

- a description of the issue and the academic accommodation(s) being requested;
- a description of the steps taken to resolve the issue informally;
- the resolution sought by the student;
- all the information or documentation considered necessary to review the case.

During the formal appeal stage, the Provost & Vice-President, Academic may extend a deadline by notifying the student by email and providing a revised timeline and an explanation of the reasons for the extension.

The Provost & Vice-President, Academic will:

- review the academic accommodation(s) being requested by the student, the academic accommodation(s) approved by the Student Experience Manager and all other relevant information or documentation provided with the request for appeal;
- request information or documentation from the Student Experience Manager and the concerned faculty or members of an academic program or department, or other department/unit, as appropriate;
- consult with outside professionals including licensed medical professionals or legal counsel, as appropriate;
- render a decision as to whether the academic accommodation(s) recommended by the Student Experience Manager will be changed, within ten calendar days following receipt of the written request for appeal.

The Provost & Vice-President, Academic or their designate(s) will communicate the decision along with the reasons behind the determined academic accommodation(s) in writing to the student and the appropriate other parties.

The decision made by the Provost & Vice-President Academic or their designate(s) is final.

The Student Experience Manager will amend the determined academic accommodation(s), if required, to comply with the decisions made pursuant to sections 7.1 or 7.6 of the Procedure.

Pending such decisions, the relevant instructors or staff will be required to implement the academic accommodation(s) approved by the Student Experience Manager.

All documentation relating to the request for appeal and resolution procedures including the decision will be sent to the Registrar for retention.