

2.4.3 Students with Documented Disabilities

POLICY

College of the Rockies (the College) is committed to providing services and reasonable academic accommodations for students with diagnosed disabilities in a manner that is consistent with its educational mandate, academic principles and legal obligations.

PURPOSE

The College acknowledges its obligation to provide academic accommodations to ensure an accessible and inclusive educational environment to the point of undue hardship for all students with disabilities. COTR will assist students with disabilities who self-identify and seek academic accommodations and/or services. The College strives to provide appropriate and reasonable accommodations.

College of the Rockies will provide academic accommodation to students with disabilities in accordance with the *Human Rights Code (BC)* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom*.

SCOPE

Provision of academic accommodations shall not lower the academic standards of the College. Students with disabilities applying for admission to the College of the Rockies programs are expected to meet the academic and non-academic course/program requirements and pre-requisites. In order to receive academic accommodation and support services for disabilities, students must:

- 1) Register with Disability Services (as soon as possible)
- 2) Have a diagnosed disability documented by a professional

DEFINITIONS

Disability: Students with disabilities are persons who:

- 1) Have a significant and persistent mobility, sensory, learning, or other physical or mental health impairment which may be permanent or temporary; and
- 2) Experiences functional restrictions or limitations of his/her ability to perform the range of life's activities; and
- 3) May experience attitudinal and/or environmental barriers that hamper his/her full and self-directed participation in life.

Reasonable Academic Accommodation: involves the removal of barriers for students with disabilities and provides them with equitable access to course information and educational opportunities. An academic

accommodation may involve an adaptation or alteration to the physical or instructional environment. Academic accommodations can range from provision of additional time for exams or use of adaptive equipment to complete exams, the use of note takers or electronic transcribers in the classroom. All cases of reasonable accommodation must:

- 1) Be based on documented individual disability needs;
- 2) Not impose a threat to personal or public safety;
- 3) Not alter the essential learning outcomes for a course or program;
- 4) Allow the most integrated experience possible.

Student: for the purpose of this policy, a student is defined as a person who is registered in one or more credit or non-credit courses offered by the College or an applicant who has submitted an application for admission to the College.

GUIDELINES

A. ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible to receive academic accommodations, students must self-identify and provide appropriate documentation of disability.

B. DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

- B.1 Students seeking reasonable academic accommodations for a disability will be required to provide appropriate supporting documentation. Documentation of a disability must be current (no more than five years old) and be prepared by professionals who have specific training, expertise, and experience in the diagnosis of conditions for which accommodation is being requested. The documentation should outline the nature of the disability, along with a detailed explanation of the functional impact of the disability and recommended accommodations and strategies.
- B.2 If a student's disability circumstances change, or if his/her disability is temporary in nature, updated documentation must be provided in order to support changes in or continuation of academic accommodations.
- B.3 In some circumstances if there is strong evidence of a disability, temporary accommodations may be recommended by the Disability Services Coordinator while documentation is being obtained.
- B.4 All information will be kept confidential according to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (BC)*.

C. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

C.1 DISABILITY SERVICES ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1) Ensure that persons with disabilities are given equitable and non-biased consideration, with respect to the College's admission criteria, for admission to all programs offered by the College for which they are academically qualified;
- 2) Review each student's documentation to determine and recommend reasonable academic accommodations to the point of undue hardship to students with disabilities in accordance with the *Human Rights Code (BC)*;
- 3) Ensure that faculty and staff are knowledgeable about relevant College policies and procedures and familiar with broader issues regarding persons with disabilities;
- 4) Contact faculty directly with permission of the student to discuss a student's disability-related limitations and/or accommodation needs in circumstances where accommodation is complex and collaboration is needed in order to appropriately accommodate a student's needs;
- 5) Notify faculty officially of the student's eligibility for accommodations through a confidential Letter of Accommodation prepared by the Disability Services Coordinator. In the event that a faculty member may have concerns regarding the academic accommodations, the Disability Services Coordinator and the faculty will collaborate to assess reasonable appropriate accommodations for the course/program in accordance with the *Human Rights Code (BC)*;
- 6) Ensure that the personal and private information about a student with a disability is handled in a confidential manner and in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (BC)*;
- 7) Strive to ensure that all College of the Rockies campuses are accessible to students with physical disabilities in consultation with the Manager of Facilities;
- 8) Provide assistance to students to apply for grants; and
- 9) Provide referrals to other resources on campus and in the community.

C.2 FACULTY ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Faculty are responsible for working in collaboration with the Disability Services Coordinator. It is their responsibility to review the recommended academic accommodations outlined in the confidential *Letter of Accommodation* and assist with the implementation as required. If faculty believe the recommended accommodations would compromise the essential learning outcomes of the course/program, pose a threat to safety, or other issues arise, it is his/her responsibility to contact the Disability Services Coordinator as soon as possible after receiving the *Letter of Accommodation*. The Disability Services Coordinator will then work with the faculty and the student to determine the accommodations that would be appropriate for the particular course/program.

C.3 STUDENT ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES (REFER TO APPENDIX A FLOWCHART)

- 1) Meet the academic requirements for admission to, and continuance in, their course and program of choice;
- 2) Self-identify as a student with a documented disability and approach the Disability Services Coordinator for assistance in a timely manner in order to allow for the arrangement of accommodations. Students who require adaptive equipment, textbooks in alternative format and specialized services such as electronic transcribers are encouraged to contact the Disability Services Coordinator at least four (4) months before classes begin;
- 3) Follow the necessary processes and procedures, and meet the established deadlines for accessing and arranging accommodations and services, as prescribed by the Disability Services Coordinator;
- 4) Provide current, relevant psychological or medical documentation to the Disability Services Coordinator to qualify for consideration of accommodations. The student is responsible for the cost of obtaining this documentation;
- 5) Contact the Disability Services Coordinator at the beginning of each semester/program to discuss their disability-related needs and to obtain a current *Letter of Accommodation*;
- 6) Meet with their instructor(s) at the beginning of the semester/program in order to give their instructor(s) the *Letter of Accommodation* and discuss implementing the accommodations. Upon request of the student, the Disability Services Coordinator may facilitate this meeting; and
- 7) Request exam accommodations in a timely manner. All requests for exam accommodation forms should be received by Student Services at least one week before the date of the exam and three weeks before final exams.

D. PROCEDURES

- 1) Students seeking academic accommodation for a disability will be required to provide appropriate supporting documentation. The Disability Service Coordinator will provide specific guidelines for what constitutes acceptable documentation for a specific disability.
- 2) Students are advised to complete an intake consultation with the Disability Services Coordinator as early as possible to avoid a delay in service.
- 3) The Disability Services Coordinator drafts a confidential *Letter of Accommodation* which outlines the recommended academic accommodations. The Disability Services Coordinator will explain the operational procedures for accessing exam accommodations and other academic accommodations and support services.
- 4) The student brings the confidential *Letter of Accommodation* to his/her instructor(s) and discusses the implementation of the accommodations. Upon request from the student, the Disability Services Coordinator can facilitate this meeting.

- 5) If issues arise throughout the term of the *Letter of Accommodation*, the student and/or instructor are encouraged to contact the Disability Services Coordinator as soon as possible.