

**ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Section:	Academic/Student (AC)
Subject:	Student Performance and Behaviour
Legislation:	<i>Alberta Human Rights Act (RSA 2000 c.A-25.2)</i>
Effective:	November 24, 1992
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**APPROVED:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**President and CEO**

**POLICY**

SAIT is committed to providing a learning environment that is inclusive for students with disabilities and that provides all students with equal opportunities. As well, SAIT will endeavour at all times to meet its obligations under applicable human rights and privacy laws as they affect students with disabilities.

**PROCEDURE****DEFINITIONS**

- Accommodation** The process of making alterations to the delivery of services, up to the point of undue hardship, so that those services are accessible to students with disabilities. Accommodations are intended to remove or reduce barriers for students with disabilities or functional limitations. Accommodation does not require SAIT to lower its academic standards, and a student with a disability has the responsibility to acquire and develop the essential skills and competencies expected of all students.
- Accommodation plan** The documented plan between SAIT and the student that specifies the reasonable accommodations that SAIT will provide for the student.

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<b>Disabilities</b>	Physical or mental conditions including, but not limited to, hearing loss, vision loss, mobility disabilities, psychological/psychiatric disabilities, learning disabilities, acute mental distress, neurological disorders, health problems and illnesses. Disabilities may be temporary or permanent.
<b>Disability documentation</b>	Documentation establishing that a student has a disability.
<b>Inclusive design</b>	Designing the environment by considering the full range of human diversity and creating an environment that can be accessed by people regardless of ability, language, gender, and other forms of human diversity.
<b>Release</b>	The document that the Accessibility Services unit of the Learner and Academic Services department prepares and the student signs, allowing Accessibility Services to release information about the student to individuals specified in the release. Accessibility Services keeps originally signed releases.
<b>Undue hardship</b>	<p>A situation where accommodating a student with disabilities leads to unreasonable and excessive challenges for SAIT. This includes but is not limited to situations where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) The accommodation significantly interferes with the rights of other students;</li><li>b) The accommodation creates health and/or safety concerns;</li><li>c) The financial cost of the accommodation is excessive, in the context of SAIT as a whole; and/or</li><li>d) The accommodation would result in a necessary course or program requirement not being met.</li></ul>
<b>Workplace accommodation</b>	A reasonable accommodation that allows a student with disabilities to successfully complete a project or work-integrated learning placement, where such project or placement is a required component of the student's program at SAIT.

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## GOVERNING PRINCIPLES

1. SAIT is committed to promoting the inclusion and full participation of students with disabilities, so that all students can access the learning environment with dignity and without impediment.
2. SAIT's principles of inclusion include:
  - a) Promoting inclusive design in its facilities, programs, courses and services.
  - b) Removing physical, attitudinal and systemic barriers.
  - c) Reasonably accommodating remaining student needs up to the point of undue hardship. The onus is on SAIT to establish that a requested accommodation cannot be accommodated due to undue hardship.
  - d) Recognizing that a student's accommodations may need to change over the course of the student's studies at SAIT.
3. SAIT will provide education to the SAIT community about reasonable accommodations and the accommodations process.

## PROCEDURE

### A. Students with Disabilities

1. Students with disabilities have the right to:
  - a) Access SAIT services and programs.
  - b) Have their disability information and documentation kept confidential. Such confidentiality is subject to disclosure to SAIT's employees and agents working in Accessibility Services and to applicable benefits providers on a strict "need-to-know" and confidential basis, and subject further to applicable laws and court orders. It is also subject to procedure [AD.1.1.2 Confidentiality of Student Information](#). A student with a disability may also grant written approval to disclosure of part or all of the confidential information in the form of a release.

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2. Potential students interested in attending SAIT have the responsibility to research and learn about the workplace requirements in their chosen occupational field and, where applicable, in their work-integrated learning organizations, so that they understand if, how and to what level their disabilities can be accommodated in particular workplace environments. They should consult with accessibility services and with the academic chairs/coordinators for the program in which they are interested for further information and/or referral to other resources.
3. Students with disabilities have the responsibility to:
  - a) Pursue their studies with the same diligence required of all SAIT students and accept responsibility for their role in successfully completing and meeting the requirements of their courses/programs.
  - b) Identify themselves to Accessibility Services prior to or at the start of their program of studies, or as soon thereafter as possible, if they wish to request a reasonable accommodation for their disability. Students should be aware that:
    - i) They need to give sufficient notice, as determined by Accessibility Services' procedures, to allow SAIT to arrange any necessary reasonable accommodation(s) for the disability. Some types of accommodations may take a significant time for SAIT to arrange, particularly those requiring changes to physical facilities, the provision of sign language interpreters, and the purchase of equipment.
    - ii) SAIT does not have a duty of instant or ideal accommodation but only of reasonable accommodation.
  - c) Provide relevant and current medical, psycho-educational, neurological and/or psychological documentation to Accessibility Services, or be willing to undergo assessment if documentation is not available, to determine eligibility for reasonable accommodations and services. The student is responsible for the costs associated with such documentation/assessment. The documentation must:
    - i) Be provided by a professional who has expertise in the area of the disability.
    - ii) Be submitted on letterhead, and include the date(s) of assessment(s) and the title, phone number and address of the professional documenting the disability.
    - iii) Be signed and dated by the professional documenting the disability.

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- iv) State the student's disability and functional limitations and indicate how the disability and limitations interfere or will likely interfere with the student's academic performance in a post-secondary learning environment.
  - v) Suggest and/or recommend specific accommodations and services that may help minimize the impact of the disability on the student's academic performance in a post-secondary learning environment.
  - d) Apply for applicable funding for reasonable accommodations, as identified by the accessibility advisor.
  - e) Contact Accessibility Services before the start of each term to review their current needs and to update current personal information.
  - f) Participate in developing appropriate strategies, be willing to try proposed reasonable solutions and work with SAIT instructors, academic chairs/coordinators and Accessibility Services personnel to resolve disagreements regarding reasonable accommodation(s).
  - g) Where possible, follow the accommodations to which the student and SAIT have agreed.
  - h) Inform Accessibility Services as soon as possible if the student's medical condition or disability has changed and/or if accommodations need to be modified.
3. In situations where accommodations granted to a student may have an impact on other students (for example, in group work situations where deadlines may be missed), the student is encouraged to work with the academic chair/coordinator and with accessibility services to discuss how to manage and limit the impacts upon other students.

## **B. Instructors and Academic Chairs/Coordinators**

- 1. Instructors and academic chairs/coordinators have the right to:
  - a) Ensure that a course's academic integrity and standards are not detrimentally affected despite a student's disability and that established competencies and requirements for SAIT's programs and courses are not compromised. This may

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include failing any student who has not successfully completed a course or program or mastered course content as applicable.

- b) Discuss requested accommodation with Accessibility Services.
  - c) Determine the appropriate method of adapting teaching styles to meet a reasonable accommodation, subject to paragraph B.2.c) of this procedure.
  - d) Consult with Accessibility Services to determine how best to reasonably accommodate students with disabilities in their courses and programs.
2. Instructors and academic chairs/coordinators have the responsibility to:
- a) Demonstrate that requirements and standards for entering a program are necessary.
  - b) Provide access to information about working conditions and bona fide occupational requirements on program websites and through program information sessions.
  - c) Whenever possible, work towards building flexibility in program design, course load, course materials and delivery format, and course evaluation methods. In some situations, instructors may need to develop and offer alternate evaluations as a reasonable accommodation.
  - d) Make reasonable accommodations within the context of SAIT's educational setting, regardless of how licensing bodies or employers would address those accommodations in a workplace setting. Depending on the nature and extent of a reasonable accommodation, the impact of the accommodation on an instructor's teaching load may need to be discussed between the instructor and the Academic Chair.
  - e) Work with Accessibility Services and students to provide the reasonable accommodations requested in an accommodation plan and to attempt in good faith to resolve disagreements regarding requested reasonable accommodations. Refer to procedures [AC.3.8.1 Attendance](#) and [AC.3.1.1 Grading and Progression](#) for information regarding SAIT's management of excused student absences and the use of "I" grades in appropriate circumstances.
  - f) Work on a reasonable basis with a student who has a documented disability in relation to that student's participation in required course field trips and/or off-campus activities. If the student's participation is not possible or reasonably

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possible, instructors and academic chairs/coordinators, in consultation with Accessibility Services, will determine if there is an alternative learning activity that can be an acceptable reasonable accommodation for the student.

- g) Inform students with mobility challenges and other functional limitations of additional emergency evacuation protocols relevant for their specific situations.
- h) Discuss requested reasonable workplace accommodations with workplace experiential learning organizations, in consultation with Accessibility Services, where the student's program requires the student to complete a workplace project or a workplace experiential learning placement, subject to the student signing a specific Consent to Release Information authorizing such discussion.
- i) Attempt to maintain the student's dignity and privacy, subject to applicable laws.
- j) Comply with procedure [AC.2.12.1 Copyright of External Materials](#) when working with accommodations involving external materials.
- k) Whenever possible, allow students with disabilities who are in good academic standing and who leave the program to return, upon the student providing reasonable notice. Refer to procedure [AC.3.1.1 Grading and Progression](#) for information on timelines.

### **C. Accessibility Services**

1. Accessibility Services has the right to:
  - a) Consult with instructors, academic chairs/coordinators, deans, students, administrative staff and external professionals in order to determine the scope and implementation of reasonable accommodations.
2. Accessibility Services has the responsibility to:
  - a) Review documentation of a student's disability to ensure its validity and currency, and request updated or additional documentation from the student as necessary.
  - b) Make recommendations to instructors, academic chairs/coordinators, deans, senior management, support services, facilities management and other stakeholders as required regarding appropriate reasonable accommodations and services. In making its recommendations, Accessibility Services will consider, but is not bound by, the suggestions/recommendations provided in the student's

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documentation. Accommodations are intended to remove specific barriers created by the environment. . Not all recommendations noted in the documentation are necessarily considered accommodations.

- c) Consult with academic chairs/coordinators in situations in which a student with a disability has requested or is likely to request accommodations in a workplace experiential learning organization.
- d) Prepare reasonable accommodation plans and advise academic chairs/coordinators of those plans when possible to do so.
- e) Prepare applicable Consents to Release Information, and obtain the student's signature on those releases, as appropriate, subject to ensuring the student has voluntarily and without duress agreed to sign same.
- f) Coordinate reasonable accommodations and services for students with disabilities.
- g) Provide support to instructors and academic chairs/coordinators in reasonably accommodating and working with students with disabilities.
- h) Work with students, instructors and academic chairs/coordinators to resolve disagreements regarding requested reasonable accommodations.
- i) Inform students with mobility challenges and other functional limitations of additional emergency evacuation protocols relevant for their specific situations
- j) Keep current with associated applicable laws.
- k) Retain disability documentation and accommodation plans on file, document each and every accommodation process, and retain such documentation as required by SAIT's records management procedures.

#### **D. Appeal of accommodation decisions**

1. Appeal of accommodation decisions made by Accessibility Services
  - a) If a student with a disability disagrees with an accommodation decision made by the student's accessibility advisor, the student shall meet with the accessibility advisor to informally resolve the disagreement.

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- b) If the disagreement cannot be informally resolved, the student may formally appeal in writing the accessibility advisor's decision, within three business days of receiving that decision, to the manager of Accessibility Services (the "manager").
  - c) The manager shall review the student's appeal and advise the student in writing of the outcome of that review, within five business days of receiving the student's appeal.
  - d) The student may formally appeal in writing the manager's decision, within three business days of receiving that decision, to the associate vice president responsible for Accessibility Services.
  - e) The associate vice president shall review the student's appeal and advise the student in writing of the outcome of that review, within five business days of receiving the student's appeal. If the review includes a face-to-face meeting with the student, the student is entitled to be accompanied to the meeting by another individual, such as the SAITSA vice president, academic; in general, however, only the student speaks on the student's behalf.
  - f) The student may formally appeal in writing the associate vice president's decision, within three business days of receiving that decision, to the vice president, academic.
  - g) The vice president, academic shall review the student's appeal and advise the student in writing of the outcome of that review, within five business days of receiving the student's appeal. If the review includes a face-to-face meeting with the student, the student is entitled to be accompanied to the meeting by another individual, such as the SAITSA vice president, academic; in general, however, only the student speaks on the student's behalf.
  - h) The vice president, academic's decision is final and binding.
2. Accommodation decisions made by instructors/academic chairs/coordinators
- a) If the instructor and student cannot informally resolve a disagreement over an accommodation, the instructor shall contact the accessibility advisor within three business days of discussing with the student.
  - b) The accessibility advisor shall contact and discuss the situation with the student's academic chair/coordinator, within three business days of being contacted by the instructor. Where service instruction is provided by a program other than the

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student's program, the academic chair/coordinator of that program shall also be consulted.

- c) If the accessibility advisor and the academic chair/coordinator cannot resolve the disagreement, the manager of Accessibility Services (the "manager") shall review the situation with the dean of the student's program. Where service instruction is provided by a program other than the student's program, the dean of that program shall also be consulted.
  - d) The dean shall advise the student in writing of the outcome of that review, within five business days of reviewing the situation with the manager. If the review includes a face-to-face meeting with the student, the student is entitled to be accompanied to the meeting by another individual, such as the SAITSA vice president, academic; in general, however, only the student speaks on the student's behalf.
  - e) The student may formally appeal in writing the dean's decision, within three business days of receiving that decision, to the vice president, academic.
  - f) The vice president, academic shall review the student's appeal and advise the student in writing of the outcome of that review, within five business days of receiving the student's appeal. If the review includes a face-to-face meeting with the student, the student is entitled to be accompanied to the meeting by another individual, such as the SAITSA vice president, academic; in general, however, only the student speaks on the student's behalf.
  - g) The vice president, academic's decision is final and binding.
3. During the time that the appeal is in progress, the accommodation decision that is under appeal continues in force.

## **POLICY/PROCEDURE REFERENCE**

AC.3.16 Accommodations for Students with Disabilities policy

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