

# What faculty members need to know about accommodating students with disabilities



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“..the University will strive to provide support for, and facilitate the accommodation of individuals with disabilities so that all may share the same level of access to opportunities, participate in the full range of activities that the University offers, and achieve their full potential as members of the University community.”

-Statement of Commitment to Persons with Disabilities, 2004

Accommodations for students with disabilities creates a level playing field upon which students can demonstrate their knowledge and skills while meeting the same academic requirements as their peers.

## When do I refer students?

### To accessibility services:

- When a student is seeking academic accommodation, or mentions a temporary or permanent disability.
- If a disability that requires accommodation needs to be verified by accessibility services before accommodation is provided.

### To a registrar:

- When a student needs assistance with identifying appropriate services and solving problems with personal circumstances.
- If a student needs academic advising and financial assistance.

## As a faculty member, what is my role in the accommodations process?

- Ask for the student's Letter of Accommodation from accessibility services before providing accommodation.
- Maintain confidentiality regarding the student's registration at accessibility services at all times.
- Release information on a need-to-know basis only, in order to fulfill your responsibilities related to teaching and assessment.
- Know the essential components of your course and maintain academic rigor.
- Talk to the student's accessibility advisor/consultant if you have concerns that a suggested accommodation may compromise academic integrity, safety to self or others, or isn't feasible in your classroom/lab/practicum setting.
- Include a statement on the course syllabus about disability-related accommodation
- Give consideration to accommodations after a deadline, test or course completion (i.e. retroactive accommodations) within existing academic processes (e.g. accessibility offices, petitions and appeals committees).
- Facilitate reasonable in-class accommodations such as:
  - ▶ determining equivalent substitutions for course components when barriers arise
  - ▶ making volunteer note-taker announcements
  - ▶ cooperating with accommodated test and exam processes
  - ▶ liaising with any service providers in your classroom (computerized note-takers, sign language interpreters, real time captioners)
  - ▶ considering requests for in-course extensions

## What are the student's roles and responsibilities while using their accommodations?

### Students must:

- Provide the necessary documentation to accessibility services.
- Request test/exam accommodations by the advertised deadlines.
- Bring requests for academic accommodations or changes to their existing accommodations to the attention of accessibility services as soon as possible.
- Follow the University's policies and guidelines regarding student and academic conduct.
- Demonstrate knowledge of essential course requirements.

## What can I do to make my course more accessible?

Include a statement in your course syllabus regarding accommodations for students with disabilities.

Incorporate universal design for learning (UDL) principles in your course development to enhance accessibility for all students.

For more information about incorporating UDL principles into your teaching, please contact your teaching and learning centre.

## When do I accept a VOI or consult with accessibility services?

### Verification of Illness form VOI/medical note

- If a time-limited medical condition results in a missed test or class(es).
- If a student is seeking disability-related accommodation, refer them to accessibility services.

### Consult with accessibility services

- For a disability-related absence or if a disability compounds the impact of an illness/life circumstance.
- If a student has registered with accessibility services, contact their accessibility advisor/consultant.



# When is academic consideration given on compassionate grounds vs. disability-related matters?

## Academic consideration

- Illness confirmed through a VOI
- Personal circumstances confirmed by a registrar or a student service such as Health & Wellness
- In such circumstances, the faculty member determines alternate assessment, as necessary.

## Disability-related accommodation

- Refer a student to accessibility services for confirmation by their accessibility advisor/consultant.
- Accessibility advisor/consultant requests appropriate medical documentation to confirm the need for disability-related accommodation.
- Student issued a Letter of Accommodation.
- Faculty and accessibility advisor/consultant discuss options to arrange an alternate assessment.



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**To book an academic accommodation workshop or consultation, please contact the service on your campus.**

*AccessAbility* Resource Centre Mississauga  
access.utm@utoronto.ca  
Phone: 905-569-4699  
utm.utoronto.ca/accessability

*AccessAbility* Services Scarborough  
ability@utsc.utoronto.ca  
Phone: 416-287-7560  
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Accessibility Services St. George  
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