Okanagan College

Accessibility Services

Student Handbook

Welcome to Accessibility Services

At Accessibility Services we help new and returning students living with disabilities navigate all aspects of student life at Okanagan College.

This handbook is designed to give students both a quick overview and a deep dive into all the services we provide.

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Accessibility Services Campus Offices

Kelowna Campus: Student Services Building (S111) (250) 862-5451	**Penticton Campus:** Ashnola Building (PL105) (250) 492-4305
Salmon Arm Campus: Main Building (SA103) (250) 832-2126	**Vernon Campus:** Administration Building (A300) (250) 545-7291

Our offices are always available for students to stop in, ask questions, seek help, and meet our Accessibility Services Coordinators.

Visit our website for all current information:
www.okanagan.bc.ca/accessibility-services

Email us! **accessibility@okanagan.bc.ca**

Important Point

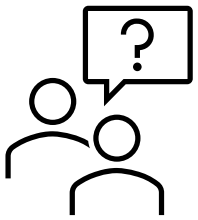
Book an appointment to ensure you have the time needed with your coordinator

A Note to Parents, Caregivers, and Advocates

Supporting Students

Navigating a new institution and new systems can be challenging, and you are certainly welcome to be involved in helping your student get started. Students can attend their meetings with a support person, parent, or advocate if they choose. Further communication with either of these parties will require a "third party consent form" to be completed by the student.

Student "Point-Person"



When your student registers with Accessibility Services, they are assigned an "Accessibility Services Coordinator." Their job is to help students with disabilities navigate all aspect of student life, including co-developing an Accommodations Plan that is personalized to the student's specific needs. The Accessibility Services Coordinator will be a "point person" available at any time for questions or help. This means that you, as a parent/guardian/advocate have the opportunity to step-back knowing that your student will be well supported during their time at Okanagan College.

Important points

- For parents/advocates to have access to student information, the student will need to complete a "Consent to Release Information to a 3rd Party" form.
- The 3rd party consent form needs to be completed and signed by the student.
- The student can visit or email Accessibility Services to obtain the consent form.

Student Independence

We also recognize that College is a time to build independence and we encourage students to practice self-advocacy skills as early as possible. The following suggestions will give a great starting point for new students:

Suggestions:

- Suggest they write a letter to their Accessibility Services Coordinator introducing themselves, what they are studying, and what some of their learning supports have been in the past.
- You can also encourage your student to look at their class schedule, learn their instructors' names and reach out early on to start a dialogue around accommodations.
- Although advocates are welcome to join, students are encouraged to attend their initial consultation meeting with Accessibility Services on their own. They will be guided through the process with the help of their Accessibility Services Coordinator. Attending on their own will give the student space to find their voice and express themself.

Parent to Parent Letter

Some of the best advice for parents of students with disabilities comes from other parents. Follow the below link to read a fantastic open letter written by a woman who worked in Accessibility Services for over 30 years and who had a child with a disability attending college for the first time. Her experience and wisdom may be helpful to those supporting new students.

Link: https://daisclasses.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/OpenLetterParents.pdf

Important Point

- Communication is at the center of self-advocacy, and it all starts with a couple small steps.
- Communicating with Accessibility Services and Instructors should start before the semester begins.

Transitioning from Highschool to College

Tips for Students coming from High School

Supports and accommodations for students with disabilities looks much different in college than in high school. The following are important differences you should be aware of:

- Unlike high school, you need to seek out your supports on campus. Find the information you need on the OC website or visit your local Student Services office.
- Your supports and accommodations do not transfer over from high school. There is a new process for accessing supports and accommodations, and it starts with registering with Accessibility Services. Visit our website to "Get Started."

- During your first initial consultation meeting, you and your Accessibility Services Coordinator will come up with a new Accommodations Plan based on your current documentation.
- Your high school IEP is no longer relevant in college. It can be useful for your coordinator to review, but new documentation from a physician or psychologist may be necessary. For more information on what documentation is needed please refer to our Medical Information Table on page 32.
- Students are encouraged to attend their initial consultation meeting on their own. It is an opportunity for students to gain important experience in independence and self-advocacy.

Do not delay!

- Once you are accepted as a student at Okanagan College, gather your medical documents and register yourself with Accessibility Services as soon as possible.
- You can register at any point during the semester, but we encourage you register as soon as you are accepted as a student.

Accessibility and Adult Special Education

Who We Support

Accessibility Services mainly supports students who are taking:

- Adult Upgrading (leading to academic graduation)
- Academic (Arts, Science, Business etc.),
- Vocational training programs (Office Admin, Early Childhood Education etc.).
- Trades

Adult Special Education (ASE)

Students who require programs that concentrate on basic life and employment skills, or who are taking an approved modified program (such as the SAME program), have many supports and accommodations built into the programming already. Prospective students should meet with the ASE Admissions Committee at their local campus to determine eligibility for ASE programs.

Your Success

Success in college can look very different for every student. Your goals might be related to grades, meeting new people, determining a career path, living independently, re-taking a challenging course, or returning to your education after some time away.

Students all have unique backgrounds and similarly diverse goals. Success looks different for all students. Reach your goals and celebrate your successes whenever they are achieved.

1. Know your goals and values.
2. Turn long-term goals into short-term plans.
3. Go to class and attend office hours.
4. Build skills relevant to your coursework.
5. Assess your learning style.
6. Try new things.
7. Maintain a social balance.
8. Manage your time with intention.
9. Take care of your health.

Student Empowerment

We encourage all students to be responsible and independent self-advocates when it comes to their disability and learning needs. Setting yourself up with accommodations you need means you are practicing self-care.

Okanagan College provides financial, educational, and emotional support through Student Services. It is up to the student to seek out the supports that work for them.

Important Points

- Communicate early with your instructors regarding your learning needs. Email works but speaking directly to them is a great first step.
- Maintain clear and respectful communication with your instructors and Accessibility Services Coordinator.
- Attend your initial consultation meeting on your own and co-build your Accommodation Plan along with your Coordinator.
- Follow the “Responsibility Checklist” and stay on top of your duties to avoid stress.

Responsibility Checklist

Below is a useful checklist to help you remember all your responsibilities with Accessibility Services and getting access to your accommodations. Feel free to print it and use it to keep track of your progress.

My Responsibility Checklist

For getting started and setting up accommodations:

- ☐ I have obtained the correct medical documents from the approved medical professionals. The documents are scanned and ready for upload.
- ☐ I have completed and submitted my self-assessment form on the Accessibility Services Website.
- ☐ My Accessibility Services Coordinator has reached out to me, and I have scheduled an initial consultation meeting.
- ☐ I have attended an initial consultation meeting where we created an Accommodation Plan and my Accommodation Letter.
- ☐ I have logged into my Accommodate Portal and requested my Accommodation Letters.

For during the semester:

- ☐ I have checked with my professors that my Accommodation Letter was received and that everything is clear regarding my accommodations.
- ☐ I have submitted my exam request forms at the Student Services office at least 7 business days prior to the exam. I have turned on my email notifications and checked my junk mail for Exam Notifications. (Those notifications have exam details: time, date, room, etc.)
- ☐ I have requested changes to my accommodations on my Accommodate Portal.

For New Semester:

- ☐ I have logged into my Accessibility Services Portal to renew my accommodations before each new semester.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality and Notification of Information Sharing

Accessibility Services respects your privacy and keeps your information confidential. You information may be shared with relevant Okanagan College staff on a need-to-know basis so they can perform their duties and provide academic or other disability-related accommodations.

These may include:

- Notifying accommodated exam staff of your test and exam accommodations.
- Liaising with professors, instructors, registrars, or program staff regarding accommodations.

Things to keep in mind:

- Registration with Accessibility Services is not noted on your transcript.
- You do not have to disclose the nature of disability or information about your health to professors, instructors, or other staff at Okanagan College.

Providing Consent:

- You will need to provide consent for Accessibility Services to share information with your family members or guardians and with external service providers.

If you have questions about confidentiality and information sharing, contact our us: accessibility@okanagan.bc.ca

Learn About Us

Accessibility Services
Overview

Accessibility Services is here to help you navigate college
as a student living with a disability.

Many students have a disability,
some choose to seek out supports and
accommodations through Accessibility Services, and some do not.

Your college journey is your own,
but we are always here if you need us.

Who We Are

Accessibility Services at Okanagan College is comprised of a team of professionals who strive to provide equitable access to education for students with disabilities.

Through a collaborative, individualized, and affirming accommodations process, we support students to:

- Achieve their academic goals,
- Engage in a personal skill development and learning process; and
- Navigate and fully participate in academic life and beyond.

We provide individualized and reasonable solutions that meet the accessibility needs of registered students while upholding academic standards and academic integrity within the College. We also act as a resource in developing an equitable, inclusive, and accessible student experience.

Our work is anchored in the British Columbia Human Rights Code, the Accessible British Columbia Act, the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and Okanagan College policies.

Who We Serve

We serve all Okanagan College students living with disabilities.

Disabilities are permanent conditions that affect how you learn or how you function on campus. They can be visible, invisible, mental, or physical.

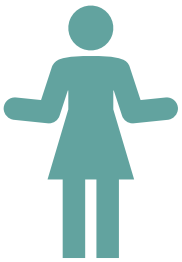
Disabilities are very common amongst college students. If you are unsure whether you have a disability or whether you qualify for accommodations, we encourage you to reach out to us.

Disabilities supported through Accessibility Services may include:

- ✓ Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- ✓ Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)
- ✓ Chronic health conditions
- ✓ Concussion & head injuries
- ✓ Learning disabilities (LD)
- ✓ Mental health conditions
- ✓ Mobility or functional disabilities
- ✓ Temporary disabilities & injuries
- ✓ Sensory Disabilities

What if I'm not sure I have a disability?

We can work with you if you suspect you have a disability or are in the process of obtaining documentation. Accessibility Services does not provide services to diagnose disabilities, but we can discuss difficulties you are experiencing and, if appropriate, provide information about how to obtain an assessment.



Not sure? Email us or book a brief consultation with one of our Accessibility Services Coordinator.

What We Do

Mission Statement

The purpose of Accessibility Services is to provide equal access to educational opportunities for students with disabilities at Okanagan College.

- ✓ We coordinate specialized services such as Sign-language interpretation and real-time captioning; as needed as per medical documentation.
- ✓ We provide access to adaptive furniture, equipment, and technology.
- ✓ We assist you to navigate the use of your accommodations with faculty and staff.
- ✓ We provide assistance with access to financial support where appropriate, for accommodations and skill development.
- ✓ We confidentially review your documentation and disability-related needs.
- ✓ We work with you to determine appropriate academic accommodations for your program of study.

Important Terms

Learning these terms will help you understand our registration process.

Accessibility Services Coordinator

An OC staff member who helps you navigate life as a student living with a disability.

Accommodations

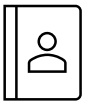
Classroom and exam adaptations to help remove barriers to learning. Examples: ASL interpreter, notetaker, audio version of textbooks.

OC Disability Verification form (OCDV)

This is a form that your doctor fills out regarding your disability. You download it from our website.

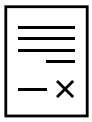
Disability

A condition that limits a person's senses or activities. It may be physical or mental, visible, or invisible.



Accommodation Plan

You and your Accessibility Services Coordinator develop a plan to add classroom/exam accomodations to help you learn.



Accommodation Letter

An official letter outlining your approved accommodations. It is sent to your instructors.

Accommodate Portal

An online platform to access our services. Request, Review, and Renew your accommodations on the Accommodate Portal. Log-in via *myOkanagan.bc.ca*

Accommodated Exams

Your Accommodation Plan might include Exam Accommodations. This sometimes includes: screen reading technology, distraction reduced space, etc.

Self-Assessment Form

Complete and submit this form to start the process of registering with Accessibility Services. Click on the "Get Started" button on our Accessibility Services homepage.

Initial Consultation Meeting

The first meeting with your Accessibility Services Coordinator where you co-develop your Accommodation Plan.

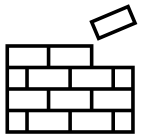
Your Accessibility Services Coordinators

Each Okanagan College campus has an Accessibility Services Coordinator, so depending on where you are attending, you will connect with your local Coordinator. They are your "point person" for navigating student life as a student living with a disability. You can expect friendly, helpful, and supportive service at all our campuses. You and your Coordinator will sit down at your initial consultation meeting and develop an Accommodation Plan that works for you.

A Guide-Map Through Accessibility Services

Accommodations

What Are Accommodations?



An accommodation involves the removal of barriers (physical or instructional) to provide an equitable learning experience. Accommodations may include, but are not limited to the following:

- An adaptation to the physical and/or instructional environment
- Alternate formats and methods of communications
- The use of adaptive technology and/or adaptations to the examination or classroom environment

How Are Accommodations Determined?

Students provide documentation completed by a qualified medical professional that confirms functional limitations and barriers related to a diagnosed disability requiring academic accommodations. The Accessibility Services Coordinator reviews this documentation and meets with the student. This provides students with the ability to share their lived experiences in terms of navigating disability, including successes and skillsets they have developed over time. The Accessibility Services Coordinator then considers this information, as well as best practices and the expected learning outcomes/core competencies of the academic program, to develop an accommodation plan. Over time, these accommodation plans can be modified in response to changes in the disability-related circumstances of the student, and/or the academic demands of the program.

Accommodation Decisions

While Accessibility Services strives to meet the needs of each individual student, there may be times when accommodations are denied. Some of these reasons may include insufficient documentation, student non-participation in the process, refusal of proposed accommodations, or unreasonable requests.

Accommodation Plans are created using a cooperative process between the student and Accessibility Services Coordinator. However, final decisions around reasonable accommodations are determined by the Accessibility Services Coordinator.

Important Point

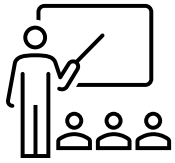
An accommodation does not usually involve modification of curriculum or evaluation; a student must still meet the learning objectives and essential requirements of the course.

Accommodations
3 Types

Classroom Accommodations

Your Accommodation Plan might include academic accommodations within the classroom. Examples of classroom accommodations include:

- Seating at the front of class to better see the presentation.
- A class note-taker or ASL interpreter.
- Adaptive equipment: adjustable desk or chair, voice-to-text recorder, etc.



Exam Accommodations

Your accommodation plan might include extra supports during tests, quizzes, and exams. You do not need to write all of your tests with Accessibility Services, but you have that option if you are registered with us.

Examples of Exam Accommodations might include:

- Extra time to complete the exam.
- Distraction Reduced environment.
- Noise Cancelling Headphones to improve concentration.

Practicum Accommodations

Part of your course might include a practicum or work placement. Being out in the community means your accommodations must match job requirements and expectations. Examples of practicum accommodations might include:

- Work placement accessible by transit.
- Shorter hours in a workday (but longer practicum to compensate).
- Preceptor feedback verbally and written.
- Approved medical absences (with longer practicum to compensate).

Register With Us

Registration Tips

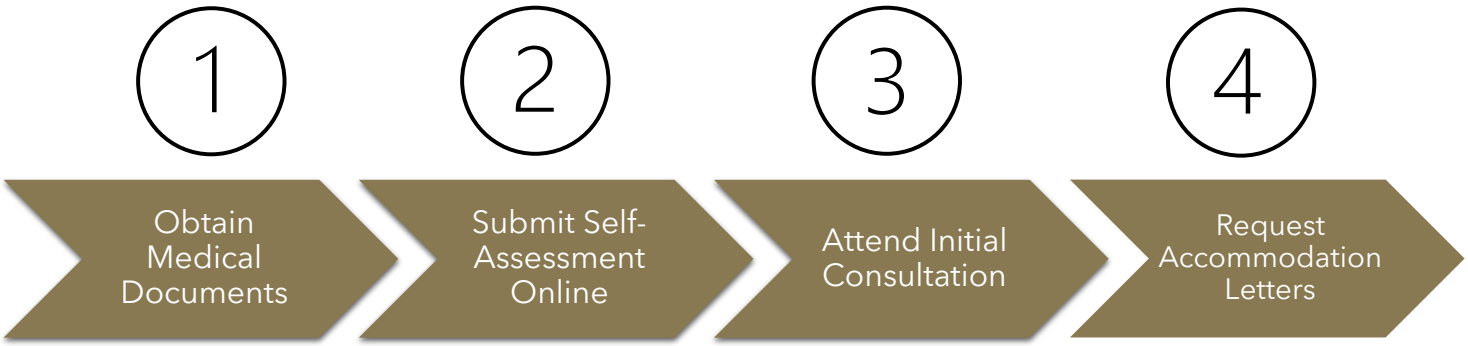
Register early. As soon as you are accepted to OC and you know you will need supports and accommodations, register on our website.

Make sure you have current medical documentation from the right professionals. Refer to the *Medical Documentation Table* to check what you need. (Page 32)

If you have any questions you can talk to your professor, search our website, read through this handbook, or email an Accessibility Services Coordinator.

Registration Overview

Follow these 4 steps to
register yourself with Accessibility Services



Important Registration Details:

- If you don't yet have your medical documents, skip to Step 2 and start your application. In some cases, you may be eligible for provisional accommodations pending your documents.
- Submit your self-assessment form as early as possible before the semester begins. Visit our homepage okanagan.bc.ca/accessibility-services and click on "Get Started."
- You will most likely need to visit a medical professional to obtain your required medical documentation. Arrange your appointments as early as possible before the semester begins.
- Detailed steps can be found in the next section.

Detailed Steps to Registration

Step 1 - Obtain Medical Documentation

Before you register yourself with Accessibility Services, you will need to get up-to-date medical documentation from a medical professional. To determine what assessment is needed from which professional, refer the Medical Documentation Table on page 32.

If you are unsure of what medical documentation you may need, please refer to the Medical Documentation Table, located on our website, on the Accessibility Services Portal, and in the handbook on page 32. If you have further questions, please reach out to an Accessibility Services Coordinator.

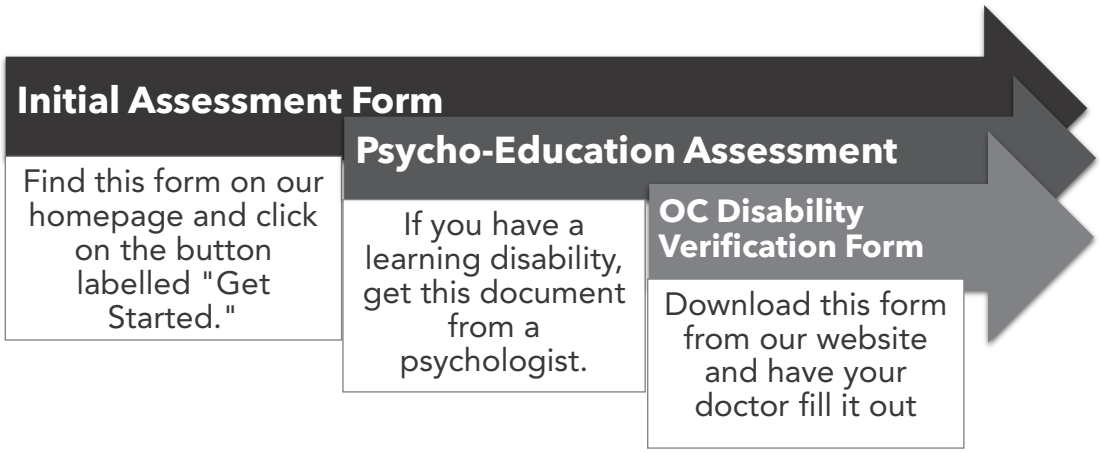
Important medical document details:

- Your high school IEP will not count as documentation.
- In many cases, documents 5 years or older are not valid.
- Make sure you get the right medical documents from the right professional, depending on your disability.
- In most cases, students will require either a Psycho-educational assessment OR an OCDV form completed by a medical professional.
- The OCDV (Verification of Permanent Disability) form can be found on our website or in the Accessibility Services Portal under "resources."
- If your doctor is filling out the OCVD Form, make sure they fill it out completely, then sign and stamp it.

2

Step 2 – Submit Self-Assessment Online

Complete our initial assessment form by clicking on the "Get Started" button on our homepage: www.okanagan.bc.ca/accessibility. At the end of the form you can upload your medical documentation and submit both at once.



Important Point

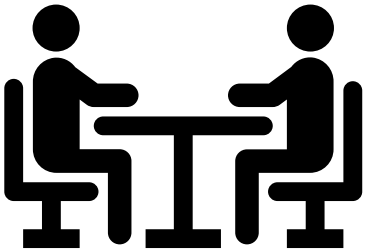
If you are unsure of what documentation you need or require accommodations or assistance in completing the Initial Assessment form, please contact our front desk at **accessibility@okanagan.bc.ca**

3

Step 3 – Attend Initial Consultation Meeting

Once you have submitted your Self-Assessment form online, we will reach out to schedule a one-hour meeting with you and an Accessibility Services Coordinator. Your Coordinator will review your documentation and work with you to outline appropriate and reasonable accommodations and supports.

What to expect during an initial consultation meeting



To help us develop an accommodation plan that's right for you, The Accessibility Services Coordinator may ask questions at your initial consultation meeting to learn more about:

- How disability impacts your life and learning
- Your previous learning experiences and the environment in which you learn best
- Your learning style and learning strengths
- If relevant, your family history

Important Point

Submit your self-assessment form and schedule your initial consultation meeting as soon as you are accepted as a student.

4

Step 4 – Request Accommodation Letters

Each semester you must request your Accommodation Letters to be sent to your instructors. Do this by following these five steps. Log into your Accommodate portal by using your myOkanagan email and password.

1. Select *Accommodation*
2. Select *Request your Accommodation Letter*
3. Click on *Add New*.
4. Select the semester from the dropdown menu.
5. Either *Submit for All Accommodations* -or- *Review the Renewal*.

Once you click on Submit, your AS Coordinator will then review and send out your Accommodation Letters. Allow three business days to process the request.

Important Point

The *Accommodate* Portal is your place to **Request, Review**, and **Renew** your Accommodation Letters. Find it in myOkanagan or on our homepage. Once you complete the steps to request your letters, please wait up to 3 business days for your AS Coordinator to send the letters out.

Accommodate Portal

Your Accommodate Portal is an online dashboard where you can Request, Review, and Renew your Accommodation Letters. Find your portal on myOkanagan.bc.ca or from the Accessibility Services homepage: Okanagan.bc.ca/accessibility-services. Use your myOkanagan email and password provided to you during admissions.

- Log-in and follow the steps listed on page 29 to request your Accommodation Letters.
- Your AS Coordinator will review your request and send your letters to the instructors that you indicated should receive your letters.
- To activate your accommodations each semester, you will need to log-in to your Accommodate Portal and request your Accommodation Letter.

If you have any questions on how to use your Accommodate Portal, please email accessibility@okanagan.bc.ca and we can supply you with an step-by-step instructions booklet.

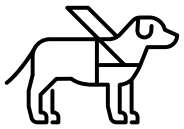
Important Point

If you have any questions about logging-in to your Accommodate Portal or requesting your Accommodation Letter, please email **accessibility@okanagan.bc.ca.**

Medical Documentation

Depending on the disability, documentation should:

- **Be current.**
- **Outline the nature and extent of the disability.**
- **Explain how the disability impacts the student in an educational environment.**
- **Outline the functional capacity in an academic setting.**
- **Provide recommendations for supports that mitigate the impact of the disability in an educational setting.**



When a service dog is required, the student may be required to show evidence of BC certification for the dog. The student will also be required to provide medical documentation to support the need for a service dog.

Important Point

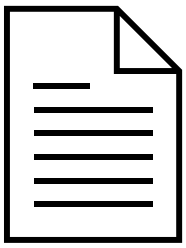
To find out what specific medical documents you need from which professional, refer to our Medical Documents Table on page 32.

Medical Documentation Table

Disability	Qualified Professionals	Required Documentation (Accessibility Services requires one of the following)
ADHD/ADD	• Specialized Health Professional • (i.e. registered psychologist, neuropsychologist, psychiatrist) • Treating family physician	• OC Disability Verification Form • Psychoeducational Assessment
Autism Spectrum Disorder	• Specialized Health Professional • (i.e. registered psychologist, neuropsychologist, psychiatrist, psychologist)	• OC Disability Verification Form • Psychoeducational Assessment
Anxiety Disorders	• Specialized Health Professional • (i.e. registered psychologist, psychiatrist) • Treating family physician	• OC Disability Verification Form • Other formal medical assessment or report
Chronic Medical Disabilities or Conditions	• Specialized Health Professional • Medical Specialist • Treating family physician	• OC Disability Verification Form
Deaf/Hard of Hearing	• Audiologist	• Audiology Assessment or Report
Learning Disabilities/ Specific Learning Disorder or Potential Learning Disability	• Registered Psychologist	• Psycho-Educational Assessment *Note: Assessments completed prior to the age of 18 must be less than 5 years old. If the assessment was done before you were 18 years old, please email: accessiblity@okanagan.bc.ca
Physical or Mobility Disability	• Medical Specialist • Treating family physician	• OC Disability Verification Form
Mental Health Disabilities	• Specialized Health Professional (i.e. registered psychologist, psychiatrist) • Treating family physician	• OC Disability Verification Form • Other formal medical assessment or report
Visual Disabilities	• Specialized health professional (i.e., ophthalmologist, optometrist, orthoptist)	• Optometry Report • Visual Acuity Report
Head Injury/ Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)	• Specialized health professional (i.e., sports medicine physician, registered neuropsychologist, registered psychologist, neurologist) • Treating family physician	• OC Disability Verification Form • Neuropsychological Assessment Report
Other Neurological Disabilities (i.e. epilepsy, FASD, MS, MD, Parkinson's Tourette's)	• Specialized health professional (i.e. registered neuropsychologist, registered psychologist, neurologist) • Treating family physician	• OC Disability Verification Form • Neuropsychological Assessment Report • Other formal medical assessment or report

**Note: while an IEP may be submitted as supporting documentation, it does not meet the criteria of the Required Documentation on its own.

Accommodation Letters



Based on your Accommodation Plan, a letter will be sent out to your instructors to verify what accommodations you will be needing in the classroom, exam room, and for practicum.

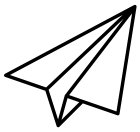
Your letter does not disclose the nature of your disability, only what supports are needed. Examples of accommodations that might be listed in your letter include:

- Specific details about your classroom or lab accommodations.
- Instructions to send tests, quizzes, and exams in the correct format to Accessibility Services.
- Notification that a service provider or aide will be present in the classroom.

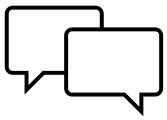
For the purposes of administering your accommodations, your instructor may need to share your Letters of Accommodation on a need-to-know basis with Teaching Assistants or other staff within an academic department. If you have questions or concerns about this, speak with your Accessibility Services Coordinator.

How do I get my Accommodation Letter?

To activate your accommodations, you will need to log into your Accommodate Portal and request your Accommodation Letters each semester. Follow the steps listed on pages 29 and 30 to access your portal and request your letters.



Once your letters have been sent out by your AS Coordinator, we encourage you to reach out directly to your instructors to confirm they have received the letters and to make sure they understand your accommodations. If you would prefer, an Accessibility Services Coordinator can speak to your instructor on your behalf - please let us know.



If anything changes on your Accommodation Plan you will need to have a new letter sent out. Also, your professors will need a new letter each semester. It is your responsibility to renew your accommodations each semester.

Renewing your Accommodations

Students are responsible for renewing their accommodations by logging into their portal each semester and requesting their Accommodation Letters.

Important Point

You may want to send your letter to some but not all your professors. In Accommodate, you have the option to select which courses/instructors you want to receive your Accommodation Letters.

Working with Professors

After you have registered with Accessibility Services your instructors will receive your Accommodation Letter notifying them of your accommodations.

Email or speak to your professor early to check that they have received your Accommodation Letter from Accessibility Services.

If they need any further clarity on your accommodations, please have them contact Accessibility Services.

Tips for Approaching Your Instructor

- When deciding how to discuss your accommodations with your professors/instructors, consider what they really need to know and what information is relevant to them.
- If you're not sure how to request or discuss accommodations, connect with your Accessibility Services Coordinator.
- You do not need to provide details about disability, diagnosis, or personal struggles. Instead, discuss your specific learning and accommodations needs and any limitations you might experience in meeting course requirements.

Some examples might be:

- "I have an academic accommodation that requires me to sit in the front row of the classroom for disability-related reasons."
- "I have an academic accommodation for the times I will need to miss class due to disability-related reasons."
- "Because it takes me longer to process written information, I may require clarity around instructions and may potentially need extensions for term work."

Important Point

Communication is always most effective when you are calm, respectful, and collaborative.

Dispute Resolution

What do I do if I feel like I'm not getting my accommodations?

1

First Step

Work out your concern with your professor in a respectful way. Speak to them or email them with your concern.

- Is your accommodation listed on your accommodation letter?
- Is there a detail on your accommodation letter that was overlooked?
- Does your professor/instructor need some more clarity around an accommodation?

2

Second Step

Reach out to your Accessibility Services Coordinator:

- Do you feel that an accommodation is missing from your accommodation plan?
- Is your professor not adhering to the accommodations listed in your accommodation letter?
- Is there a communication breakdown with your professor that you need support with?

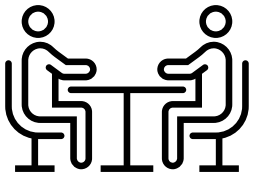
3

Third Step

If you and your professor could not come up with a satisfactory solution, and your Accessibility Services Coordinator has run out of options, there is formal appeals process found in the *Accessibility Academic Accommodations for Student Policy*.

Working with your Accessibility Services Coordinator

Get to know Your Coordinator



Each campus has an Accessibility Services Coordinator. You are always welcome to seek them out in their office or send them an email if you have any questions. Contact details are located on our website and at the beginning of this handbook.

- Once you complete and submit your self-assessment package online, your Accessibility Services Coordinator will reach out to you to schedule an initial consultation appointment.
- During your appointment you will work together to come up with an Accommodation Plan. Your plan is created through a collaborative process between you and your Accessibility Services Coordinator.
- If you feel you need to change or update your accommodations, schedule an appointment with your Accessibility Services Coordinator as soon as possible.
- Before each new semester, renew your accommodations through the Accessibility Services Portal. Your letters will then be sent out to your professors/instructors.

Important Point

Final decisions regarding reasonable accommodations are determined by the Accessibility Services Coordinator.

Practicum and Work Placements

Your course might include a practicum or work-placement that brings you out into the community. This situation blends studying with work and can present new challenges and new opportunities for students living with disabilities.

- **Before choosing your practicum location, consult with your Accessibility Services Coordinator.** They will have important insights into what environments might work with or against your disability.

- **Understand all the tasks you will be undertaking at your practicum.** Once you have a list of tasks, you and your Accessibility Services Coordinator can add strategies to your Accommodation Plan to help you succeed in your new work assignment.

- **Know your practicum supervisor/liaison and communicate with them early on.** Unlike your instructor, your practicum supervisor might not understand your accommodations or learning needs, and they will need some notice and clarity around your Accommodation Plan. Your Accessibility Services Coordinator can help you navigate this relationship.

Challenges & Opportunities

Transitioning from high school to college means you need to take on more independence, speak up and advocate for yourself. Transitioning from college to the workplace can be a new challenge where you must work with an employer to find reasonable accommodations that work for you and for them.

Both transitions are opportunities to grow in confidence and self-empowerment. Communicate early on with your instructors and supervisors, and if you have any doubt, your Accessibility Services Coordinator is available to help.

Other Services

In addition to your academic and exam accommodations, your Accessibility Services Coordinator can help set you up with several other services to support your college experience. These may include:

Peer Notetaking, Tutors, and Care Aids

There are funding options available to students looking for Notetaking, Tutors, and Care Aid services on campus. Students should consult with their Accessibility Services Coordinator to access funding and get advice around which service would work best. Students are ultimately responsible for hiring notetakers, tutors, or care aids.

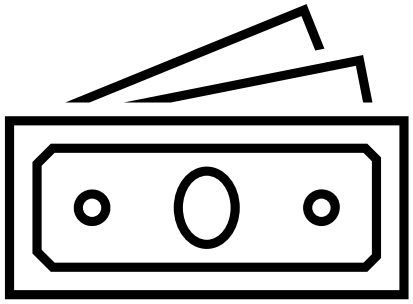
ASL Interpreters

Depending on medical diagnosis, some students are eligible for access to an ASL interpreter. Okanagan College will hire an ASL interpreter on the student's behalf. Students should make their request for an interpreter as early as possible to allow time for hiring and recruitment.

Adaptive Technology and Equipment

Okanagan College has a limited amount of equipment for loan to students. Students need to submit a form given to them by their Accessibility Services Coordinator, allow some processing time, then collect the equipment from the Accessibility Services office once the equipment is ready for pickup.

Financial Support, Loans, & Grants



You Have Funding Options

Students living with a disability have many funding options that help with things such as: tuition, housing, hiring of care-aids and interpreters, supplies, transportation, and child-care.

Apply for Student Aid

Applying for funding starts with Student Aid BC. Full-time students should apply for a loan and Part-Time students should apply for other funding. Once you are approved you will be given a "Student Aid BC Number." You can then apply for further grants that are specific to your disability and financial status.

Schedule a Meeting

Your Accessibility Services Coordinator can help you navigate application forms and what to apply for. Schedule a meeting as soon as you have your Student Aid BC Number and Medical Documentation.

Step-by-Step Process

Important Points

- The amount of money you are approved for is determined by Student Aid BC.
- Your coordinator does not know the amount you will receive until you apply and are approved.

Grants for Students with Disabilities

Appendix 8 Form

Once you are approved for a full-time loan or part-time funding, you may be eligible for grants. The next step is to have your Accessibility Services Coordinator help you submit an Appendix 8 form. Your Coordinator needs to fill out "section 3," add your medical documentation and Student Aid Number, and send it all in for approval.

Once approved, you may be eligible for the following grants:

▪ Canada Student Grant for Persons with Permanent Disabilities
▪ BC Supplemental Bursary for Students with Disabilities
▪ BC Access Grant for Students with Permanent Disabilities
▪ Canada Student Grand for Services and Equipment for persons with permanent disabilities
▪ Assistance Program for Students with Permanent Disabilities (if CSG-SEPD funding has been exhausted for the present funding year
▪ Learning Disability Assessment Reimbursement
▪ Learning Disability Assessment Bursary

More information is available on the Student Aid BC website.

www.studentaidbc.ca

Important points

- Applying for loans, funding, and grants can be somewhat confusing. It is best to schedule a meeting with your Accessibility Services Coordinator to discuss options.
- Getting approved for funding can take time. Schedule your appointment before the semester starts.

Accommodated Exams

Accommodate Tests/Quizzes/Exams

Your Accommodation Plan might include accommodations during quizzes, tests, and exams. If you have a "distraction reduced" environment as one of your accommodations, you may write separate from the rest of the class to give you the space needed. An invigilator will oversee the exam and you will have access to your exam accommodations.

Examples of exam accommodations might include:

- Extra time to complete the exam.
- A reader technology to read the exam questions to you.
- Distraction-reduced space

Important Point

You are not required to take every exam with Accessibility Services. You may write with the rest of the class if you choose.

Guide-Map for Accommodated Exams

How to Write your Tests with Accessibility Services

If you would like to write your test/quiz/exam with Accessibility Services, you must log into your Accommodate Portal and submit an *Accommodated Exam Request* within 7 business days of the exam (within 14 days for final exams).

1. **Submit Your Request.** Log into your Accommodate Portal to submit an Accommodated Exam Request. You will need to submit one request for each exam you wish to write with Accessibility Services.

2. **We Schedule the Exam.** After you submit an Accommodated Exam Request, Accessibility Services will schedule your exam. This may take several days to arrange.

3. **Confirmation Email.** Once your exam is scheduled, you will receive an email confirmation with exam details: when and where you will write with us. Check your junk mail for this important confirmation.

4. **Check your Request Status.** After you submit your request, you can check the status of your request in your Accommodate portal. New requests will be sitting in the "pending" column. Once your request has been confirmed with the instructor and scheduled, it will appear in the "Approved" column.

For further questions regarding writing Accommodated Exams, contact your local campus Accommodated Exams Coordinator:

Kelowna Campus: kloexams@okanagan.bc.ca
Vernon Campus: asvernon@okanagan.bc.ca
Penticton Campus: aspenexams@okanagan.bc.ca
Salmon Arm Campus: assalexams@okanagan.bc.ca

Important points

- Be aware of the deadlines for submitting your requests.
- Check your junkmail for important confirmation emails.
- After you submit, allow up to 3 business days for your request to be processed.

Resources

Student Supports on Campus

Student Services

Students can access a wide range of support through Student Services. Check the OC website or drop into your local Student Services office.

Counselling

OC has counsellors on hand to help in moments of need. To book a counselling appointment, visit this page: www.okanagan.bc.ca/counselling-services

Mental Health Support

Students can also access mental health support 24/7 through the Province of BC's Here2Talk page: www.here2talk.ca/main

Student Support Coordinator

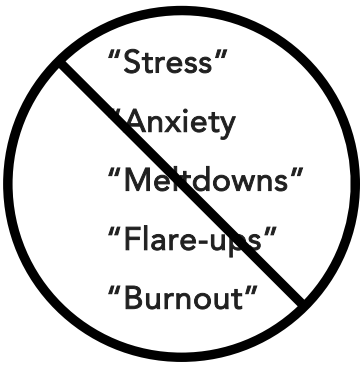
For students who are facing multiple barriers and not sure where to start, contact Kaylen Lesko by email: Klesko@okanagan.bc.ca

Indigenous Services

Indigenous Student Services Coordinators can provide culturally relevant support including funding applications, entrance advising, and more. Learn more and book an appointment with an Indigenous Student Services Coordinator at www.okanagan.bc.ca/indigenous-services.

Self-Care and Finding Balance

Being a student, with or without a disability, means adapting to new environments and new challenges. Self-care is a proactive method of keeping balance in your life to avoid:



***Remember:**

- Stay ahead of the stress by learning about your disability, your ways of learning, and what makes you feel healthy.
- *Being Consistent* works better than *Playing Catchup*.
- Know yourself and find strategies early-on to keep your body and mind in a healthy state.

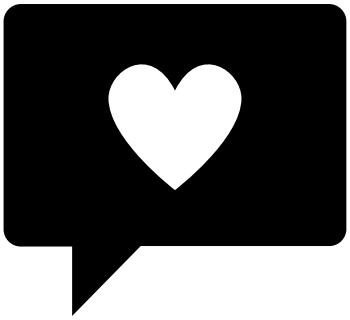
Know Your Disability, Know Yourself.

Reading about your disability or condition helps you understand yourself and why you learn the way you learn. Knowing yourself is valuable for finding strategies that work for you. Take time to read-up about your condition.

Great Health Tips

Your health and your studies are closely linked. These simple tips will help all students, with or without disabilities, thrive at college:

- **Get plenty of sleep.** Studies show that consistent and quality sleep keeps your brain focused and your immune system operating at full capacity.



- **Plan ahead.** Use a day-planner or your phone calendar with programmed reminders. Write things down. Look at deadlines and plan backwards with important assignments and upcoming tests and quizzes. Study in small chunks each day and keep your stress-levels low.

- **Find time to play.** Being active, being social, and building community are important parts of campus life. Small things like 'introducing yourself' or 'getting coffee' go a long way. A 'potluck' with your class is a good way to kick-off or send-off a semester.

- **Eat Smart.** Eating healthy can be simple and save you money. Packing a sandwich is healthy and easy to prepare the night before. Avoid fried foods and eat colorful delicious things that give you energy. Meal routines make it easy to plan (think: "Taco Tuesdays)." Finally, drinking lots of water helps your body function properly so visit the water fountains regularly.

- **Talk it out.** Communicating stresses and successes with others will be emotionally helpful. Communicate with your instructor, fellow students, and your Accessibility Services Coordinator if you need help or see stressors on the horizon. And don't forget to share positive news and good feelings as well; everyone likes to share in good times.

- **Reach out.** You never have to struggle alone. You can talk to your instructor, fellow students, AS coordinator, Indigenous student services coordinator, student support coordinator, counselling services. Find their contact information by visiting okanagan.bc.ca.

FAQs

I have a disability; do I need to register with Accessibility Services?

Answer: No, you oversee your journey as a student, and it is your choice how you advocate for your learning needs. You have the option of coordinating your accommodations directly with your instructors however they may refer you to Accessibility Services. With the help of an Accessibility Services Coordinator and by registering with Accessibility Services you have more recourse for your rights as a student.

Can I just arrange with my instructor any supports or accommodations I might need?

Answer: Yes, rather than going through the process of registering with Accessibility Services, students may prefer to communicate their learning needs directly with their professors. In some cases, the professor may feel that Accessibility Services is better equipped to set up accommodations and the student may be referred to contact us.

Do I have to disclose my disability to the instructor?

Answer: No, you do NOT need to disclose your disability to your instructor. If you register with Accessibility Services, information regarding your disability is kept confidential. Your instructors may only be notified of accommodations without specifics on your diagnosis.

Who is eligible for accommodations?

Answer: All Okanagan College students who are living with a diagnosed disability have access to accommodations through Accessibility Services.

What if I require temporary accommodations?

Answer: Accommodations for short-term or temporary disabilities (such as a broken arm) should be coordinated directly with the professor or instructor. If no solution is found between the student and their instructor, then the student can contact Accessibility Services to discuss options.

Can my parent bring me to my initial consultation appointment?

Answer: Yes, however we encourage you to meet with your Accessibility Services Coordinator on your own. Also, for your parent/guardian to access any information about you or act on your behalf, you will need to fill out a “Third Party Consent Form” to authorize them. Ask your Coordinator for more information.

How do I know if I qualify to register with Accessibility Services?

Answer: If you have a disability and have current medical documentation from a certified professional proving needs for accommodations.

How do I register with Accessibility Services?

Answer: Visit the Accessibility Services homepage and click on "Get Started" to fill out an online "Self-Assessment" form. Your doctor may need to fill out our "OC Disability Verification" form or you may need a psycho-educational assessment from a psychologist. More information is in this handbook and on our website.

Who will be my Accessibility Services Coordinator?

Answer: Each OC campus has an Accessibility Services Coordinator so whichever campus you attend; there will you find your Coordinator.

Do I need to have updated documentation each year?

Answer: We require current and recent medical documents. Those medical documents are usually relevant for the duration of your studies. If during your studies, your diagnosis changes or you require new accommodations you may be required to obtain new medical documents. If there is a multi-year gap between during your studies, you may require new medical documentation. Your Accessibility Services Coordinator can help you with any questions related to documentation.

What do I do with my Accommodation Letter?

Answer: Accommodation Letters are automatically sent to your instructors after you successfully register with Accessibility Services. Once your letters are sent out, it is a good idea to check-in with your instructors to make sure they have received and understood your accommodations. Before each new semester you must log into your Accessibility Services Portal and renew your accommodations. New letters will then be sent out.

How do I book my accommodated test/exam?

Answer: Currently (as of April 2023) you must email Accessibility Services with an "Exam Request." Submit 1 form for EACH of test/quiz/exam that you want to write with Accessibility Services. Once you have submitted a request, allow up to 3 business days for scheduling after which you will receive a confirmation email with the exam details: date, time, location, etc.

What do I do if I am unclear about my responsibilities or what to do next?

Answer: Check out the "My Responsibility Checklist" in this handbook. Also feel free to contact your Accessibility Services Coordinator at any time for guidance.

Links

Below are useful links to help you find information and get registered with Accessibility Services.

- Okanagan College Homepage
  https://www.okanagan.bc.ca/
- Accessibility Services at Okanagan College
  https://www.okanagan.bc.ca/accessibility-services
  + Our Self-Assessment Form
  + OC Disability Verification Form
- Student Aid BC
  https://studentaidbc.ca/
- Information on Disabilities
  + Dyslexia
  https://www.affordablecollegesonline.org/college-resource-center/dyslexia-dysgraphia/
  + Learning Disabilities
  https://www.transitionresourceguide.ca/learn-about-accessibility/specific-disability-information/learning-disabilities
  + Transition from Highschool to College
  https://www.transitionresourceguide.ca/plan-your-journey/transition-stories
  + ADHD
  https://www.transitionresourceguide.ca/learn-about-accessibility/specific-disability-information/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder
  + Great Video on ADHD
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dySVk6slquY
  + Adult ADHD
  https://www.aafp.org/dam/AAFP/documents/patient_care/adhd_toolkit/adhd19-patient-handout.pdf
  + Back to School Tips
  https://www.additudemag.com/adult-education-tips-for-students-with-adhd/
  + Tips for College Students with ADHD
  https://www.verywellmind.com/college-students-with-adhd-20820
  + Archive of webinars for ADHD
  https://chadd.org/webinars/

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