

STUDENT ACCOMMODATION POLICY

Authorizer: Vice President, Academic/Student Affairs and Human Resources

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POLICY STATEMENT:

Conestoga College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning (Conestoga) is committed to providing an accessible education to all students, including those with disabilities, in a welcoming and inclusive learning environment. Conestoga provides accommodations to students with permanent and temporary disabilities to ensure every student has an equal opportunity to pursue academic success.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to students who self-disclose and register with Student Success Services.

DEFINITIONS:

Academic Accommodation

An academic accommodation is an individualized adjustment to how a student accesses or participates in a course or program, and can include instructional and/or environmental changes. Academic accommodations do not typically alter the learning outcomes or essential program requirements.

Disability

As defined by the Ontario Human Rights Code, a disability is:

- any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- a mental disorder, or
- an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

Functional Limitation

Functional limitations are identified areas of weakness related to a disability that affect academic performance and are used to identify reasonable accommodation.

Retroactive Accommodation

Accommodations for permanent or temporary disabilities are considered retroactive when the request is made after-the-fact, as the result of a barrier that prevented a student from communicating their need for accommodation.

Undue Hardship

Undue hardship includes but is not limited to significant alteration to a work process that would disadvantage other employees; significant alteration to the fundamental nature of the learning outcomes and/or the academic standards of a program or course; economic hardship to a Conestoga program or department; significant adverse impact on learning opportunities for other students; the health and safety of other students or employees and/or safety hazards to other persons or property; or significant disruption of Conestoga operations.

POLICY ELABORATION:**General Terms:**

- Every student has the right to access education in an environment that promotes individual dignity, equality, and respect. Conestoga prohibits and will not tolerate discrimination or harassment on the basis of disability, or any other ground enumerated in the Ontario Human Rights Code.
- Conestoga focuses on the removal of barriers to education and services for students by designing facilities, systems, services and curricula in such a way that accessibility is enhanced and the need for individual accommodation is minimized.
- Accommodation is intended to promote integration and full participation of persons with disabilities. Students will be accommodated in a manner that respects their dignity.
- Conestoga administration must be made aware of any significant resource implications, including financial implications, when accommodating students with disabilities.

Accommodation Principles:

- Conestoga will provide reasonable academic accommodations to students with functional limitations (related to their disability) to the point of undue hardship.
 - As each person has unique needs, accommodation is explored and provided on an individualized basis.
 - Where there is more than one reasonable approach to accommodation, Conestoga reserves the right to choose the approach that is best suited to its operational and academic requirements.
 - If accommodation would result in a significant or substantial health or safety risk to the student requesting accommodation, to other students, college employees or volunteers, or other members of Conestoga community, Conestoga may deny the accommodation on the grounds of undue hardship.

- Where warranted, Conestoga may require additional medical or psychological assessment before the student can be accommodated. The student may be required to adhere to a specified treatment plan that addresses safety issues with respect to risk of harm to self or others in order to be accommodated at Conestoga.
- Where a person with a disability cannot be accommodated in accordance with these principles, or where a person is found incapable of performing the essential requirements of a program or course, alternatives are explored with the student. Any arrangements regarding withdrawal must be approved by the Registrar. Issues related to fees or possible fee refunds are decided by the Registrar.
- Conestoga accepts retroactive accommodation requests unless there are legitimate reasons for acting otherwise. Conestoga considers each request based on the student's individual needs and unique circumstances.

Expectations of the Student:

- The accommodation process is a cooperative process, involving shared responsibilities between the student requesting accommodation and Conestoga.
- Students are responsible for being aware of the academic and clinical or placement requirements of the program and the challenges inherent in them, as well as possible limitations on future employment opportunities arising from job demands or restrictions.
- Students seeking accommodation must provide documentation from a regulated health care professional that confirms their functional limitations affecting academic performance.
 - Students with developing mental health conditions, or who are waiting for medical documentation from their registered health care professionals, may still receive reasonable accommodations. Such students may seek academic accommodations without documentation of a diagnosed condition, but must provide information from a physician that a diagnosis is under investigation.
- Once accommodation is provided, students are expected to meet the published learning outcomes and essential requirements of their academic programs.
- Conestoga is not responsible for costs incurred by a party who retains a paid advisor.

REFERENCES:

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005
Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
Ontario Human Rights Code

Accessibility Policy and Multi-Year Plan
 Service Animal Policy and Procedure
 Student Accommodation Procedure

REVISION LOG:

Academic Forum	12/11/2019
Academic Coordinating Committee	01/13/2020