

**TITLE: ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

**POLICY STATEMENT:**

Red Deer College promotes an inclusive learning environment for students who have disabilities by ensuring equal access to programs and services. Where there are barriers to full participation in the educational experience due to functional limitations related to a disability, Red Deer College is committed to providing appropriate Academic Accommodations, to the point of Undue Hardship, in order to support students with disabilities in their quest to achieve their full potential.

**PURPOSE:**

This policy outlines the roles and responsibilities of the students, staff and faculty at Red Deer College in the implementation of Academic Accommodations.

**SCOPE:**

This policy applies to situations where students are seeking Academic Accommodations at Red Deer College.

**PRINCIPLES:**

1. Red Deer College recognizes the right for all students to participate in all aspects of college life.
2. All members of the college community share the responsibility to promote equal access and create an inclusive learning environment.
3. Red Deer College supports students with disabilities in their development of self-advocacy skills and in becoming independent learners.
4. Red Deer College complies with relevant legislation:
  - 4.1 Alberta Human Rights Act
  - 4.2 Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

**DEFINITIONS:**

**Academic Accommodations:** the process of altering the delivery of services to make those services accessible to a person with a documented disability. In the academic environment, Academic Accommodations are a planned variation on course delivery or student assessment in response to the disability. Academic Accommodations do not lower academic standards.

**Accommodations Agreement:** a document that outlines the services and Academic Accommodations the student requests and is eligible to receive. It is signed by both the student and the Red Deer College Disability Resources Coordinator.

**Documentation:** a report signed and dated by a qualified medical professional or registered psychologist qualified to diagnose. It will be current and include a clear diagnosis and describe how the disability, and treatment if applicable, impacts the individual's functioning in an academic setting.

**Learner Independence:** describes a learner's ability to manage his/her own learning activities in order to achieve desired learning outcomes.

**Learners with Disabilities:** individuals who provide Documentation verifying that they have physical, cognitive, learning, sensory, psychological, neurological or temporary impairment(s) that may impact their academic progress.

**Undue Hardship:** excessive challenges that could deem the Academic Accommodations to be unreasonable. This includes, but is not limited to, situations where:

- the cost of the Academic Accommodations has significant financial impact on the institution as a whole;
- the nature of the student's disability disallows him/her from attaining bona fide educational requirements for completion of the program or bona fide occupational requirements for the field of work connected to the program;
- there are health and safety concerns for the student being accommodated and/or others;
- there is significant interference with the opportunity of other students to achieve their academic goals.

#### **GUIDELINES:**

1. Students who require Academic Accommodations are encouraged to self-identify two months prior to the start of their program or as soon thereafter as possible in order to ensure that required Academic Accommodations are in place at the start of their program.
2. In accordance with Red Deer College's intent to encourage Learner Independence, all discussion about a student's need for Academic Accommodations occurs directly with the student. In situations where the student has a legal guardian designated to oversee educational matters on his/her behalf, the guardian is allowed to participate in discussion.
3. Students requesting Academic Accommodations provide current and relevant Documentation outlining the nature of their disability from a qualified medical professional or registered psychologist.
4. Appropriate and reasonable Academic Accommodations are determined through a process that could include, but is not limited to:
  - 4.1 discussion with the student, review of Academic Accommodations history and an examination of Documentation provided;
  - 4.2 discussion with the author of the Documentation for clarification with the written consent of the student;
  - 4.3 research of current literature;
  - 4.4 review of program/course(s) delivery structure and assessment methods;
  - 4.5 discussion with course instructor(s), and/or the Associate Dean that could include weighing the impact of the Academic Accommodations on the learning environment for other students and decided whether or not to proceed with a specific Academic Accommodation. Refer to 'Undue Hardship' in Definitions.
5. Students have access to an appeal process when Academic Accommodations are denied (RDC policies: Appeals, Informal Resolution and Appeals, Formal).

6. Information about a student's disability remains confidential unless written consent is received by the student and is stored with Red Deer College Disability Resources Coordinator. It is not shared without the student's written consent.

## **PROCEDURES:**

### **1. Student responsibilities:**

- 1.1. Make contact with Red Deer College Disability Resources Coordinator and identify his/her needs as soon as possible in order to arrange Academic Accommodations and services.
- 1.2. Provide relevant Documentation.
- 1.3. Develop an Academic Accommodations plan with a Red Deer College Disability Resources staff member and sign the Academic Accommodations agreement.
- 1.4. Apply to funding sources to cover the cost of services when potentially eligible.
- 1.5. Follow established procedures to access specific services and Academic Accommodations, e.g. writing exams with Academic Accommodations.
- 1.6. Utilize strategies that foster Learner Independence and self-advocacy skills.
- 1.7. Request Academic Accommodations five business days prior to examination/assessment.

### **2. Red Deer College Disability Resources Coordinator responsibilities:**

- 2.1. Follow established procedure to determine appropriate and reasonable Academic Accommodations on a case-by-case basis.
- 2.2. Develop an Academic Accommodations plan with the student and sign the Academic Accommodations agreement.
- 2.3. Inform faculty of student's in-class and testing Academic Accommodations needs.
- 2.4. Advise on and refer student to funding sources as appropriate. Ensure student understands established procedures to access specific services and Academic Accommodations.
- 2.5. Connect the student to service providers as needed.
- 2.6. Assist the student to develop self-advocacy skills and increase Learner Independence.
- 2.7. Negotiate and advocate on the student's behalf as required.
- 2.8. Maintain a confidential file for each student that includes disability Documentation, case notes, Academic Accommodations and service history.
- 2.9. Advise the student of approval or denial of Academic Accommodations requests. In instances where Academic Accommodations are denied the Disability Resources Coordinator refers the student to the Appeals: Informal Resolution Policy.

**3. Faculty responsibilities:**

- 3.1. Assist in the implementation of Academic Accommodations for a student as recommended by Disability Resources.
- 3.2. Follow established procedures for implementation of Academic Accommodations as required, e.g. submitting exams to be written with Academic Accommodations to Testing Services within required timeline of 2 business days.
- 3.3. Work with Disability Resources to develop solutions, if possible, in situations where the recommended Academic Accommodations could compromise the ability of the student to attain the essential competencies required for successful completion of the course.
- 3.4. Maintain confidentiality and support the student's dignity and privacy in relation to the disability.

**4. Associate Vice President Academic responsibilities:**

- 4.1. Administer the Appeals: Informal Resolution policy, where required.

**OFFICER RESPONSIBLE:** Chair of Academic Council

**RECOMMENDING AUTHORITY:** Academic Council

**CONSULTATION FOR REVIEW:** Director of Student Services, Associate Vice President Academic, Deans' Council, Students with Disabilities

**POLICY REVIEW DATE:** December 2019

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** July 1, 2015

**REVISION HISTORY:** July 1, 1995 (Students with Disabilities Policy and Standard Practice)  
July 1, 2002  
July 1, 2004  
July 1, 2015 (revised and renamed Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities)

**RELATED POLICIES:**

- Admission of Students to Credit Programs Policy
- Appeals: Formal Policy
- Appeals: Informal Resolution Policy
- Final Examinations Policy
- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy
- Graduation, Certification and Completion Policy
- Harassment and Discrimination Policy
- Student Misconduct: Academic and Non-Academic Policy
- Universal Design Policy
- Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy

**CONNECTION TO BOARD POLICIES:**

All RDC policies support relevant Board of Governors policies.