A. Background and Definitions

Niagara College endorses fair and equal access to education for students with disabilities. Niagara College’s commitment to the provision of accommodation includes, when necessary, program/course accommodation and any such variety of services that will enable each student to successfully access the curriculum engaged by their program/course of choice.

A student with disabilities is a person who has or has had, or is believed to have had any of the following:

a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness;
b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language; or
d) any degree of mental disability resulting in functional limitations that impair the student’s academic functioning while pursuing their studies.

B. Purpose

Respectful of its obligation to students with disabilities, Niagara College adheres in spirit and practice to the Ontario Human Rights Code. Niagara College is committed to providing access to an educational environment that fosters a climate of mutual respect, fairness, dignity and equitable treatment, and to extend to students opportunities to exercise their worth and potential.

Niagara College aspires towards a shared exchange of learning. As the educational experiences of students with disabilities broaden, it is of equal importance that the general college community continues to grow in awareness and sensitivity.

C. Policy Statements

1. Notwithstanding any disability and/or provision of accommodation, a student must be able to perform the essential requirements of a program/course when attending Niagara College. Where a disability, prevents or interferes with the student performing the essential requirements of a program or course, thus impacting the academic integrity of the program or course, the accommodation of the disability may constitute undue hardship.
2. Students with disabilities are encouraged to self-identify with Niagara College’s Accessibility Services. In order to receive accommodations, students are required to provide sufficient documentation to confirm their limitations and types of accommodations being requested.

3. Students are not required to disclose their disability diagnosis to register for accessibility services, and accommodations and supports. A diagnosis will only be requested in rare circumstances such as where a person’s needs are complex, challenging or unclear and more information is needed or where the information clearly relates to the accommodation being sought; clear justification of why a diagnosis is needed must be provided in these situations. Students may need to consent to providing a diagnosis if applying to certain federally or provincially-funded bursaries or grants and privately-funded external scholarships or financial awards.

4. Responsibility to self and others is expected of all students. While Niagara College accepts its responsibility to provide assistance and accommodations to students with disabilities, where needed, students seeking accommodations have a reciprocal responsibility to participate in the accommodation process and fulfill college expectations. All students, including those with disabilities, will be subject to the following:
   a) matters of discipline;
   b) consequences of contravening academic agreements, including when an individual agreement concerning alternate delivery or evaluation of course material between the faculty and student is broken by the student;
   c) general expectations relating to demeanor and behavior within the college community; and
   d) program and course-related academic criteria.

5. The College’s Centre for Health, Wellness and Accessibility Services provides the following services:
   a) assessment of individual needs;
   b) dissemination of information;
   c) liaison with faculty members and others, with student’s consent, to coordinate assistance, especially in the areas of advocacy, academic delivery and evaluation;
d) liaison with Academic Administrators, with student’s consent, to inform them of accommodations made for students with disabilities, in their programs/courses;

e) liaison with college service providers, with student’s consent, to inform them of service accommodations and needs;

f) provision of assistive devices and human resources as aids to learning; and

g) ongoing support and counselling.

6. It is acknowledged that students may require accommodations on an interim basis, as appropriate, and for a reasonable period of time, pending receipt of medical documentation; limitations and required accommodations to be confirmed by Accessibility Services. Students may also require temporary accommodations which will be arranged for the period of time that the limitations and/or restrictions are substantiated. Once established, interim and/or temporary accommodations are arranged on a case-by-case basis, according to documented functional limitations. In keeping with Niagara College’s obligations under, and commitments to, the Ontario Human Rights Code, accommodations will be implemented as needed, short of undue hardship.

7. A student’s involvement with Accessibility Services and the fact that the student has received academic accommodations will not be identified on the student’s official student record, test results, academic transcripts or graduation documentation.

8. Any requests for retroactive accommodations will be meaningfully considered on a case-by-case basis.

D. Related Documents

Procedure:  NC800 Student Accommodations