

Wilfrid Laurier International College Policy

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Policy

Document

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Responsibility	College Director and Principal, WLIC
Initial Issue Date	23 August 2021
Related Documents	Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Procedures (6.1)

Version Control

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students, including those with disabilities, are provided with an accessible learning environment to achieve academic success. This policy acknowledges and promotes equal rights for all persons with disabilities as protected in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005)*.

2. Jurisdiction and Scope

Instructors, students, WLIC Accessible Learning and administrative staff have a shared responsibility in the accommodation process. The legal obligation to accommodate will require members of the college community to exercise creativity and flexibility in responding to the needs of students with disabilities while maintaining academic standards.

This policy applies to:

- 2.1. the instruction and delivery of course materials in the classroom and through electronic methods;
- 2.2. student participation in course activities; and
- 2.3. an instructor's methods of evaluation and assessment, and a student's demonstration of understanding of course content and skills through evaluation and assessment.

3. Definitions

3.1. academic accommodation

means the creation of an individualized plan for a student with a disability to receive course content and materials, to participate in course activities, and/or to demonstrate understanding of course content and skills through evaluation and assessment.

Academic accessibility is based on inclusive design of course and program curricula, delivery methods and activities, and their forms of assessment which recognizes the difference between students and groups of learners. Wilfrid Laurier International College shall provide academic accommodation that does not impose undue hardship.

3.2. applicant

means a person applying to become a student at Wilfrid Laurier International College.

3.3. College

means Wilfrid Laurier International College.

3.4. disability

means disability as defined in the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.19, as amended ("*Code*"). "*Disability* covers a broad range and degree of conditions, some visible and some not visible. A disability may have been present from birth, caused by an accident, or developed over time."

3.5. documents regarding disability

means any and all documents verifying that a student has a disability, or to understand

the impact of the disability and any resulting functional limitations it can place on the student. These documents must be based on a current, thorough, and appropriate assessment from a registered health care professional qualified to diagnose the condition.

3.6. **essential academic requirements**

means the knowledge and skills that a student must acquire and demonstrate to successfully meet the learning objectives of a course or program.

3.7. **WLIC Accessible Learning**

refers to the WLIC staff responsible for reviewing documentation and overseeing the academic accommodation process at WLIC.

3.8. **student with a disability**

is a person who experiences mental, cognitive, physical or sensory impairment for which they require accommodation.

3.9. **student**

means a student at Wilfrid Laurier International College registered in courses.

3.10. **undue hardship**

as defined in the Ontario Human Rights Code.

4. **Principles**

4.1. Wilfrid Laurier International College believes in the inherent dignity of all people and is committed to identifying and removing the barriers that prevent full and meaningful participation in all aspects of campus life.

4.2. The College promotes and is committed to diversity, inclusion, and accessibility in all programming and in all College actions. The College embraces the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* and is committed to ensuring that all students with disabilities have the access and support needed to enable academic success. The College strives to make its programming accessible to all students.

4.3. The College is committed to fostering an inclusive educational environment that:

- i) recognizes the equality, dignity, and autonomy of all persons,
- ii) recognizes its duty to consider the needs of persons with disabilities,
- iii) recognizes that those living with disabilities have the right to full integration and participation,
- iv) promotes mutual respect,
- v) provides academic accommodations and equal opportunity without discrimination,
- vi) fosters student learning through a range of teaching methods and practices,
- vii) protects the privacy and confidentiality of its students, and
- viii) recognizes the shared responsibility of students, staff, instructors, the College, and WLIC Accessible Learning, to exercise flexibility and creativity in the provision of academic accommodations.

- 4.4. The College will work to provide academic accommodations for students with disabilities in a manner that most respects the dignity of the person as protected in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.
- 4.5. The College is committed to preserving academic freedom and high academic standards. The College will provide academic accommodations to assist students with disabilities to fulfill the academic requirements of their programs without alteration in academic standards or outcomes. Wilfrid Laurier International College will ensure the nature and extent of accommodations are consistent with and support course integrity and academic standards, as well as ensure fairness for all students.
- 4.6. The College re-affirms that all students are expected to satisfy the essential requirements of their program of studies and recognizes that students with disabilities may require academic accommodations to do so, including alterations to how the student demonstrates that he, she, or they have acquired the necessary knowledge and skills.
- 4.7. Accommodating students with disabilities is a shared responsibility and a collaborative process. Therefore, the College is committed to educating students, instructors, and staff about the requirements to accommodate students with disabilities, the provisions of the *Code* and *AODA*, and the resources available to provide additional information and guidance. The College is also committed to updating appropriate technology and providing education and training to faculty and staff so that materials are increasingly more accessible to all students. All members of the College community are responsible for complying with this policy.

5. **Confidentiality**

- 5.1. All communication regarding the accommodation of a student living with a disability shall be confidential and will be held securely at Wilfrid Laurier International College. Information on accommodation is only released on a need-to-know basis within the University community or when the student consents to a broader release of information.

6. **Resolution of Disagreements**

- 6.1. Instructors, students and WLIC Accessible Learning are encouraged to seek agreement and together be satisfied with the provision of academic accommodations. In the event of a disagreement, disputes will be resolved in accordance with the principles of this policy and using the procedures described below.

7. **Authority**

- 7.1. The College Leadership are responsible for establishing procedures related to this policy and their regular review. College Leadership has ultimate authority for the resolution of disagreements.

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1. University Application Process:

- 1.1. Applicants are strongly encouraged to declare that they have need of or believe they may be eligible for accommodation(s) in the process of application to Wilfrid Laurier International College. For programs that require on-site attendance for essays, tests, interviews, and other like non-academic criteria, advance notice is recommended to ensure appropriate accommodation can be arranged within appropriate timelines.
- 1.2. Upon request, the College will provide WLIC Accessible Learning information to applicants in accessible formats and within a reasonable timeframe.
- 1.3. If questions arise during the application process pertaining to the ability of an applicant to fulfill the essential requirements of a program, even if accommodated, the issue will be discussed by College leadership, College staff, and WLIC Accessible Learning. WLIC Accessible Learning will work with the applicant to determine academic accommodations which may enable the applicant to meet the essential academic requirements.
- 1.4. If the College leadership determines that no accommodation would enable the student to meet the essential academic requirements, WLIC Accessible Learning staff shall so inform the applicant and other options shall be discussed.
- 1.5. Admission into a program does not guarantee that an applicant will, in fact, be able to meet the essential academic requirements of the program or any specific course.

2. WLIC Accessible Learning will:

- 2.1. partner with students, faculty, instructors, staff and other professionals to facilitate academic accommodations;
- 2.2. receive and verify all documents regarding disability;
- 2.3. request and obtain any additional documents regarding disability reasonably required by the College;
- 2.4. assist students in obtaining documents regarding disability, as reasonably required;
- 2.5. ensure that all student information and all documents regarding disability are treated confidentially and maintained in secure files;
- 2.6. review all documents regarding disability, conduct an interview with the student and recommend an academic accommodation plan, where appropriate;
- 2.7. facilitate academic accommodations for students with disabilities;

- 2.8. consult with instructors and College staff, as needed, on crafting academic accommodations to enable students to satisfy the essential requirements of their program of studies;
- 2.9. coordinate the requests for and assist in the provision of academic accommodations;
- 2.10. inform students with disabilities of their obligations as registrants;
- 2.11. provide problem-solving support to students with disabilities, when applicable;
- 2.12. assist and provide information pertaining to academic accommodations to instructors, College Leadership and other College staff;
- 2.13. provide documentation, upon request and with the consent of the student, confirming a student's registration with WLIC Accessible Learning and outlining the student's academic accommodation;
- 2.14. educate, when appropriate, students, instructors, and College staff as to their rights and responsibilities under this policy;
- 2.15. consult with various individuals and offices as required;
- 2.16. ensure that tests and exams held in WLIC Accessible Learning are conducted and invigilated in accordance with Wilfrid Laurier International College policy and procedure; and
- 2.17. ensure confidential and timely delivery of tests or exams according to WLIC Accessible Learning procedures.

3. Students with disabilities requiring accommodation must:

- 3.1. follow academic accommodation procedures;
- 3.2. meet the essential academic requirements of a course/program; and
- 3.3. be responsible for discussing with WLIC Accessible Learning, their instructor, or College support staff, any concerns they may have about whether or not they would be able to meet the essential academic requirements of a course/program prior to enrolling in a course/program;
- 3.4. are advised to register with WLIC Accessible Learning when they need assistance beyond what is provided in the course in relation to receiving course curriculum and materials and/or participating in course activities.
- 3.5. register with WLIC Accessible Learning when they need an accommodation for demonstration of understanding of course content and skills through evaluation and assessment;
- 3.6. provide WLIC Accessible Learning with all documents regarding disability that are reasonably requested by the College, to keep that information up to date, and to consent to the College making use of this information on a need-to-know basis for appropriate College purposes, including the administration of this policy;
- 3.7. contact WLIC Accessible Learning as soon as possible about any required accommodations, taking into account the complexity of implementation of the required accommodation(s);

- 3.8. must learn and follow WLIC Accessible Learning procedures with regard to registration, renewing registration, booking quizzes, tests and exams, and the provision of accommodation and supports;
- 3.9. collaborate with WLIC Accessible Learning, instructors, and others (for example, academic advisors, College Leadership, College support Staff, Library staff etc.) by identifying learning needs to develop an appropriate accommodation plan;
- 3.10. understand that they need to activate the sending of accommodation letters to their instructors through the online accommodation support system used by WLIC Accessible Learning;
- 3.11. understand that choosing not to use an approved accommodation while completing a course may impact any appeal made on the basis of disability in that course.
- 3.12. request that their eligibility for WLIC awards, scholarships or other opportunities be considered on the basis of their accommodation (e.g. reduced course load).

4. Instructors shall:

- 4.1. strive to make course curriculum and materials and course activities accessible to all students;
- 4.2. work with College and Wilfrid Laurier University stakeholders to accommodate WLIC Accessible Learning registrants who require specific accommodation while preserving the essential academic requirements of the course and program;
- 4.3. direct students to appropriate College support staff if they are unsure about their eligibility to receive academic accommodations
- 4.4. direct students seeking evaluation of their disability-related documentation to WLIC Accessible Learning;
- 4.5. not accept or review a student's documents regarding disability;
- 4.6. maintain the confidentiality and privacy of students with disabilities who are registered with WLIC Accessible Learning;
- 4.7. understand that they are the primary agents of providing student academic accommodation within the University; WLIC Accessible Learning facilitates the accommodation process for students who are registered with WLIC Accessible Learning;
- 4.8. collaborate with WLIC Accessible Learning in structuring an appropriate accommodation plan that meets the needs of the student with a disability and satisfies the essential academic requirements of the respective course or program;
- 4.9. notify the student and confer with WLIC Accessible Learning as soon as possible, regarding concerns that may arise related to fulfilling the essential academic requirements of the course or program within the agreed upon accommodation plan, and continue to work with the student and WLIC Accessible Learning to explore alternative accommodations. If unsuccessful in developing an appropriate accommodation plan, refer to the College leadership or College staff;
- 4.10. provide textbooks and other materials to the library as soon as possible to ensure

- that materials can be provided in an accessible format; and
- 4.11. incorporate identified techniques to provide academic accessibility within the teaching/learning environment.

5. College leadership shall:

- 5.1. provide an opportunity for all College staff members and College instructors to familiarize themselves with this policy and that the practices associated with the delivery of accommodations are consistent with this policy;
- 5.2. assist instructors in ensuring that course instruction, materials and activities are accessible in order to develop an inclusive learning environment for students;
- 5.3. assist College staff in ensuring that course instruction, materials and activities are accessible in order to develop an inclusive learning environment for students;
- 5.4. ensure that academic accommodations received by students will not be a barrier to eligibility for university honours or opportunities.
- 5.5. provide resources to support approved academic accommodations;
- 5.6. discuss with the student and WLIC Accessible Learning concerns about how accommodations relate to the essential academic requirements of the course/program;
- 5.7. review decisions not to provide any academic accommodation or a particular academic accommodation;
- 5.8. ensure the provision of accommodations for students with disabilities is outlined on the WLIC Student Portal.

6. College staff shall:

- 6.1. consult with students and WLIC Accessible Learning, as required, when students have first identified their need for accommodations. This may occur prior to registration, following registration, during a student's program or when a student approaches WLIC Accessible Learning with an accommodation request;
- 6.2. make accommodations for ceremonies, in conjunction with WLIC Accessible Learning as appropriate, with advance notice from the student or other relevant parties.
- 6.3. review, upon a student's, instructor's and/or WLIC Accessible Learning's request, concerns with the recommended accommodation plan and assist in developing alternatives;
- 6.4. collaborate with College Admissions Staff to provide accommodations for entrance requirements, (e.g. math placement tests, entrance tests);

7. College Learning & Teaching Staff shall:

- 7.1. provide resources to faculty members related to universal instructional design, delivery, and evaluation methods; and
- 7.2. provide information and training related to academic accommodations specifically for students with disabilities.

8. Resolution of Disagreements

8.1. Review of Accommodation Plan if Not Accepted:

- i) If the student with a disability, WLIC Accessible Learning, and the instructor cannot agree on the academic accommodations to be provided, the instructor or WLIC Accessible Learning Manager (or designate from WLIC Accessible Learning) shall discuss the matter with College Director and Principal promptly after it becomes clear that there will be no agreement on the provision of academic accommodations.
- ii) College Director and Principal shall review all relevant documentation and will consult with others as appropriate to resolve the matter. College Director may request additional documentation from all parties. If the College Director agrees with the student's requested academic accommodations, College Director shall direct in writing that those academic accommodations be provided. If the College Director does not agree that the academic accommodations requested by the student should be provided, they shall provide their decision and the reasons for that decision in writing to the student, the instructor, and any relevant College staff.
- iii) The decision of the College Director and Principal is final.

8.2. Accommodation Pending Review

- i) The College recognizes that decisions involving academic accommodations must be made quickly and in a timely manner. If a request for accommodation is under review, the instructor and WLIC Accessible Learning shall review the accommodation plan to determine what portion, if any, of the plan is appropriate to implement immediately.