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CENTRE

2011/12

STUDENT GUIDE TO ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

Introduction

Welcome to SAIT. Accessibility Services offers accommodations and services for SAIT students with chronic health conditions and various permanent and temporary disabilities. SAIT's Accessibility Services is committed to providing an accessible and supportive environment to facilitate each student's academic development. Accessibility Services partners with various members of the SAIT community to facilitate reasonable academic accommodations for students with disabilities and health conditions.

This handbook informs you of the accommodations and services offered by Accessibility Services and summarizes steps to take to access these accommodations and services. We hope you will use this handbook to enhance your experience at SAIT. We wish you success in your learning experience and look forward to working with you.

Types of Accommodations and Services

Students with documented disabilities or health conditions may be eligible for a number of accommodations and services. The type of accommodation and service provided is dependent on the nature of the documented disability or health condition. The accommodation or service is intended to remove barriers related to the functional limitation caused by the disability or health condition. Below lists common accommodations and services provided for eligible students.

Classroom accommodations and services

- Use of sign language interpreters
- Use of volunteer note takers in the classroom
- Permission to record lectures or labs
- Copies of instructors' overheads
- Breaks during class-time
- Use of adaptive technology in the classroom and labs
- Course material in alternative format

Exam accommodations

- Extended exam time
- Distraction reduced environments
- Exams divided into sections to permit breaks
- Alternate exam formats (e.g. electronic exams for use with adaptive technology)
- Use of adaptive technology

Workplace accommodations

- Accessible work and computer stations
- Job coach
- Flextime
- Adaptive software and technology

Adaptive technology

The following technology is available at SAIT:

- High speed scanner
- Screen reading software (Kurzweil; TextHelp)
- Screen magnification software with speech (Zoom Text)
- Franklin Language Master
- FM transmitter/receiver system
- Digital recorders

Services

- Learning strategists
- Tutors
- Academic aides
- Adaptive technology training

Eligibility for Accommodations and Services

Please read AC 3.16.1 procedures for more information about rights and responsibilities of students, Accessibility Services personnel and instructors. Go to www.mysait.ca and look under the SAIT Resources tab. Click on AC Academic/Student to look for the link to the policy and procedure.

Please follow the steps noted below to be eligible for accommodations and services.

Step 1

Please provide relevant and current medical, psycho-educational, and/or psychological documentation to Accessibility Services.

The documentation must:

- be provided by a medical or psychological professional
- be submitted on letterhead, and include the date(s) of assessment(s) and the title, phone number, and address of the professional documenting the disability
- be signed and dated by the professional documenting the disability
- state your disability and indicate how the disability or health condition interferes or will likely interfere with your academic performance in a post-secondary learning environment
- suggest specific accommodations and services that may help minimize the impact of the disability or health condition on your academic performance in a post-secondary learning environment.

The Accessibility Advisor reviews the documentation. Eligibility for specific accommodations and services depends on the nature of the disability or health condition, the documentation substantiating the barrier created by the disability or health condition, and the requirements of each course.

Step 2

Contact an Accessibility Advisor and discuss your needs **prior to each** semester or training period. Accessibility Services needs sufficient notice to allow time to arrange for accommodations and services and to apply for the appropriate funding. Please contact Accessibility Services **at least a month** before the start of **each semester or training period**. The Accessibility Advisor recommends appropriate classroom, exam or work place accommodations in a *Request for Accommodations* memo.

Step 3

You are responsible for delivering a *Request for Accommodations* memo to your Academic Chair and to each classroom instructor **at the beginning of each semester or training period**. It is very important that you meet with the Academic Chair of your program to discuss the accommodations noted in the memo. See Appendix A for suggestions about how to talk about your disability and requested accommodations.

Note: If you are a student taking courses by distance, contact the distance education office offering the course and provide the *Request for Accommodation* memo.

Step 4

If you are eligible for funding, you must apply for the funding to offset the cost of some accommodations and services. See Appendix B for information about funding. Your Accessibility Advisor will assist you with funding application.

How to access accommodations and services

Please follow the procedures noted below for how to access classroom accommodations, exam accommodations, assistive services, alternative format materials, and adaptive technology loans.

Classroom accommodations

- Contact an Accessibility Advisor before **each semester or training period** begins.
- Pick up your *Request for Accommodation* memos from Accessibility Services.
- Deliver a *Request for Accommodations* memo to the Academic Chair of your program and to each of your instructors at the beginning of the semester. Discuss the accommodations with the Academic Chair and the instructor. See Appendix A for suggestions on how to talk with your instructors and Academic Chair.
- If the instructor or Academic Chair does not agree to the requested accommodations, please inform the Accessibility Advisor immediately.

Exam accommodations

- Contact an Accessibility Advisor before **each semester or training period** begins.
- Pick up your *Request for Accommodation* memos from Accessibility Services.

- Deliver a *Request for Accommodations* memo to your Academic Chair and each of your classroom instructors at the beginning of the semester. Discuss the exam accommodations with the Academic Chair and instructor.
- If the Academic Chair or instructor does not agree to the requested accommodations, please inform the Accessibility Advisor immediately.
- At least **seven (7) days** prior to a mid semester test and **two (2) weeks** prior to each final exam, you pick up an *Accessibility Services Accommodated Exam* form from Accessibility Services or Testing Services.
- Meet with your instructor with the form to **schedule the date and time** the instructor wants you to write the accommodated exam. In order to maintain academic integrity and protect the content on the exam, the instructor will likely schedule the accommodated exam so that it overlaps with the time the rest of the class writes the exam. Note that Testing Services is open at 8:00 am Monday to Friday for accommodated exams.
 - The instructor will keep the *white* copy to attach to the exam.
 - You keep the *yellow* copy for your records.
 - You hand in the *pink* copy of the Accessibility Services Accommodated Exam Form at least **three** days before each midterm and **two** weeks before each final exam that you require exam accommodations.
- Arrive at Testing Services at least **fifteen minutes** before the exam is scheduled to start. Bring your SAIT identification with you. You are required to finish the exam within the scheduled time.
- Bring only the material needed to write the exam and comply with the instructions noted on the Accessibility Services Accommodated Exam Form.
- If you miss an exam, like any other student, you must contact your instructor. Testing Services is not responsible for rescheduling and cannot give permission for deferred exams.

Note: If you are a student taking courses by distance, contact the distance education office offering the course and arrange for your exam date and time. Make sure you provide the *Request for Accommodation* memo.

Service providers

If you require service providers such as sign language interpreters, tutors, note takers or academic strategists, discuss your needs with your Accessibility Advisor.

- ***Sign language interpreters/CART note takers:*** Inform your Accessibility Advisor of your need for sign language interpreters or CART note takers. It is very important to do so well in advance of starting your semester or training as it is often very difficult to find sign language interpreters. Accessibility Services cannot guarantee that a sign language interpreter will be available for all of your courses.
- ***Academic Strategist:*** If you have been approved for an academic strategist, you make your first appointment to meet with the academic strategist through the Education Assistant. Accessibility Services cannot guarantee that an academic strategist will be available.

- **Tutors:** If you have been approved for tutors, please ask the Education Assistant to try to find a tutor in your subject area. Accessibility Services cannot guarantee that a tutor will be available for all of your courses.
- **Note takers/academic aides:** If you have been approved for note takers, please ask the Education Assistant to try to find a note taker for your classes. Accessibility Services cannot guarantee that a note taker will be available for your classes.

Alternative format course material

- Obtaining your course materials in alternative format is a very time consuming process. We recommend you start the following process **at least one month** before the start of the semester or training period.
- If you do not have adaptive technology, meet with the Adaptive Technologist to discuss the appropriate adaptive technology for you. The Adaptive Technologist will assist you in obtaining funding for adaptive technology and show you how to use the adaptive technology on campus.
- If you are in a SAIT certificate, diploma or degree program, contact the Academic Chair of your program to obtain a list of textbooks for your courses. Ask the Academic Chair to confirm that the instructors will be using the textbooks. You are responsible for purchasing the textbooks from the bookstore.
- If you are an apprentice, inform the Accessibility Advisor which trade and training period you will be starting. The Accessibility Advisor will arrange for modules to be delivered to Accessibility Services in electronic format. Accessibility Services will contact you when the modules arrive. The electronic format modules are the property of Alberta Apprentice Industry and Training and **must be returned at the end of the training period**.
- You can scan your own textbooks using the high speed scanner in MC311. If you are not sure how to do scan you textbooks, make an appointment with the Adaptive Technologist to receive training.

Adaptive technology

- Accessibility Services has some adaptive technology that can be lent to you while your funding for adaptive technology is in progress. Discuss your needs with your Accessibility Advisor.
- MC311 in the Heart Building has eight computers equipped with a variety of adaptive software (JAWS; Kurzweil; TextHelp; Zoom Text; Inspiration). SAIT II campus has six computers with adaptive technology. Both have high speed scanners.
- Contact the Adaptive Technologist for introductory training in how to use the adaptive software.

Accessibility Services Staff Roles

Accessibility Advisor

- Reviews documentation of a disability or health condition to determine eligibility for accommodations and services, or refers students for a new or updated assessment if the

student does not have appropriate documentation or screening for a disability warrants a referral

- Recommends reasonable academic accommodations and appropriate assistive services and technology for students, based on the recommendations in the documentation
- Write memos informing faculty of the specific accommodation needs of the students with disabilities in their classes
- Write letters for funding for assistive services and technology to accompany students' applications and appeals for student loans and grants
- Advises and assists students if concerns arise

Adaptive Technologist

- Recommends appropriate adaptive technology for students
- Provides introductory training on how to use adaptive technology
- Collects quotes for adaptive technology to accompany funding requests

Education Assistant

- Matches students with learning strategist, tutors, readers and scribes
- Facilitates exam accommodations at main and other SAIT campus

Accessibility Services Assistant

- Makes appointments
- Orders and tracks electronic version of modules for apprentices
- Tracks adaptive technology, alternative format textbooks and electronic modules signed out and returned by students

Contact us

Accessibility Services
Learner Success Centre
MC 221, Heart Building, SAIT
1301 – 16th Avenue NW
Calgary, Alberta
Canada T2M 0L4
Phone: 403.774.5093
Fax: 403.210.4557
E-mail: accessibility.services@sait.ca

Appendix A

How to discuss your accommodation request

Most instructors and Academic Chairs are very cooperative and willing to accommodate students with disabilities and health conditions, especially if they understand how your disability affects you academically. Please speak with your Academic Chair and your instructors about your disability so that they understand your specific needs. The following are some suggestions for approaching your instructors and Academic Chair:

- At the beginning of each semester or training period, make an appointment to meet privately with the Academic Chair and with each of your instructors.
- Introduce yourself and give your Academic Chair and your instructors the *Request for Accommodations* memo from the Accessibility Advisor.
- Explain how your disability affects you as a student. Explain what adaptations, accommodations or strategies will help you do your best in the classroom, the lab, or elsewhere to meet course requirements. Discuss alternatives. For instance, if you have difficulty writing essay exams due to your disability, suggest alternatives that work best for you, such as writing your exam using a computer.
- Explain that Accessibility Services provides some of the services or accommodations you require and that instructors and Academic Chair can help by agreeing to the requested accommodations or services.
- Come to a clear agreement. Before you end the meeting, you and the instructor and Academic Chair should have a clear understanding of what he/she is willing to do and what accommodations and services you and Accessibility Services will coordinate.
- Thank the instructor and Academic Chair. Let them know that you appreciate their willingness to work with you and accommodate your disability or medical condition.
- If you feel an instructor or Academic Chair has not understood what you explained about your needs, or does not agree that you should receive certain accommodations, talk with the Accessibility Advisor as soon as possible.

Appendix B

Funding for Adaptive Technology and Services

You and your Accessibility Advisor determine the required accommodations and services based on the recommendations in the assessment report and/or medical documentation. Students with **permanent** disabilities and health conditions **may** be eligible for funding for services and adaptive technology through the Canada Study Grant for Post-secondary Students with Permanent Disabilities (CSG). Other funding sources may include Workers Compensation Board or private insurance companies.

The Canada Study Grant for Post-secondary Students with Permanent Disabilities (CSG) provides funding for services and adaptive technologies for students with permanent disabilities. In order to receive this grant, you must provide documentation that proves you have a permanent disability and need to be eligible for a full-time or part-time Canada Student Loan. For more information, see alis.alberta.ca/pdf/disabilities/informationSheet.pdf

The application for funding for adaptive technology and assistive services is time consuming and somewhat complex. **Please note that funding approval may take four to six weeks so it is best to start early!**

Step 1: Complete the funding application forms

- Complete a student loan application along with a Schedule 4.
- Inform your Accessibility Advisor if you want to take a reduced course load. The Accessibility Advisor will address the need in a cover letter that accompanies the loan application and an education summary plan signed by the academic chair of your program.
- Take the student loan application to Student Services office in MA 211 to have a student loans advisor review the application for completeness and sign the appropriate section.

Step 2: Return the application forms to your Accessibility Advisor

Return the student loan application form and Schedule 4 to your Accessibility Advisor. The Accessibility Advisor writes a cover letter with a rationale for the requested services and adaptive technology. The Accessibility Advisor forwards the student loan and Schedule 4, documentation of permanent disability and applicable quotes to Students Finance.

Step 3: Inform the Accessibility Advisor as soon as you are notified of your funding application status

- You will be notified by letter and receive a cheque from Alberta Students Finance. Please inform Accessibility Services as soon as you receive notification of receiving a Canada Study Grant.
- If you are accessing services (e.g. academic strategist or tutor) through Accessibility Services, you must sign over all or a portion of this cheque. Accessibility Services forwards a receipt to Students Finance confirming you have paid for the services.

- If you applied for funding for adaptive technology, you purchase the adaptive technology with your Canada Study Grant before you hand over any remaining funds to Accessibility Services. The Accessibility Advisor will provide the vendor information that you can use to purchase the adaptive technology. After you purchase the technology, you can hand over the remaining balance from the grant to Accessibility Services. Write a personal cheque to SAIT Accessibility Services and meet with the Accessibility Advisor. The Accessibility Advisor will assist you with proper paper work and will provide a receipt of your cheque. You are responsible for forwarding proof of purchasing the adaptive technology to Students Finance.
- If you choose to find your own service provider, you must keep receipts for all services and technology. Copies of these receipts must be sent to Students Finance by the end of the academic year.
- See Appendix C for suggestions for how to manage your Canada Study Grant.

Appendix C

Suggestions for Managing the Canada Study Grant

- You will receive notification from Alberta Students Finance about the amount of your Canada Study Grant. The letter does not tell you which services or assistive technology the grant is intended to cover. Ask the Accessibility Advisor for clarification of what the grant covers if you do not know.
- Create a filing folder called Canada Study Grant. Keep all records (e.g. letters, receipts, banking information) related to the Canada Study Grant in this folder and store the folder in a safe place.
- Deposit the Canada Study Grant in a separate account from your daily banking account. This separate account helps you keep track of the money used for assistive services and technology. Keep any banking records in the file folder labeled Canada Study Grant .
- Keep a complete record of each type of assistive service you receive. You can photocopy the Record of Assistive Service form on the next page of this handbook.
- Obtain receipts from each service provider you use. Staple the receipt to the Record of Assistive Service form and file in the Canada Study Grant folder.
- At the end of each semester, send photocopies (**not** the originals) of the receipts and the Record of Assistive Services forms with a letter explaining you are providing receipts for the Canada Study Grant. Indicate your Social Insurance Number on the letter, the receipts and Record of Assistive Services form. The Social Insurance Number is used to locate your file at Students Finance. See a sample letter at the end of this handout.
- At the end of the academic year (April 30), you must return any unused Canada Study Grant to Students Finance. Use a method that will help you track whether they have received the refund (e.g. cheque that is returned to you once cashed).

*Sample letter for Students Finance
confirming use of Canada Study Grant*

123 Anywhere Street
Calgary, AB
T2P 1V1

May 1, 2012

Students Finance
PO BOX 28000 STN Main
Edmonton AB
T5J 4R4

**RE: Receipt for Canada Study Grant 2011/2012
John Doe
SIN 123 456 789**

I, John Doe, confirm that I received \$7000 of the Canada Study Grant in September 2010.

I used all of the funds for the intended purposes. I used \$2000 to purchase assistive software, \$3000 for tutor services, and \$2000 for academic strategist services. Please see the attached copy of the receipt for proof of purchase of the assistive software. See the attached Record of Assistive Services forms and receipts from the services providers.

If you need additional information, please contact me at 403.123.4567.

Sincerely,

John Doe