



Medicine Hat College Policy ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Policy #:	SD-05
Policy Authority:	Manager, Student Engagement
Executive Sponsor:	Associate Vice-President, Student Development
Approved by:	President
Effective Date:	March 16, 2017
Next Mandatory Review Date:	March 16, 2022
Frequency of Review:	Every 5 years

1. POLICY OBJECTIVE

Medicine Hat College (MHC) is committed to providing access and supports to diverse learners. The purpose of this policy is to confirm and define the rights and responsibilities of MHC, its employees, and students with documented disabilities with respect to Academic Accommodation at MHC. The College will provide a supportive learning environment for students with documented disabilities while maintaining the academic integrity of the programs.

2. POLICY SCOPE

This policy applies to all MHC students applying to or registered in credit programs, non-credit programs and courses offered through Continuing Education who have disclosed a documented disability that may affect their academic progress. This policy addresses Academic Accommodation only. The duty to accommodate as defined in law or this policy extends to all MHC employees who as a result of their employment duties are the persons who affect the accommodation.

3. DEFINITIONS

- **Academic Accommodation:** making of adjustments or alternative arrangements in the educational environment to eliminate a discriminatory effect upon a student with a documented disability without compromising the academic integrity of the course, program or assignment or lowering academic standards.
- **Academic Accommodations Agreement:** a signed agreement between MHC and the student that
 - (a) indicates the accommodation(s) to be provided by MHC for the student,
 - (b) indicates the student's agreement to the terms outlined in the Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities policy, and
 - (c) authorizes the release of information to appropriate individuals as necessary.
- **Bona-fide Educational Requirements:** requirements that are a reasonable and justifiable component of the program that may limit entry to, or completion of a program or a course.

They include the admission, progression and graduation requirements that are essential to maintaining the academic integrity of a program, including those necessary for students to acquire and demonstrate essential skills and knowledge.

- **Disability:** is defined by the *Alberta Human Rights Act* as any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement (permanent or temporary) that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness or any mental disorder, developmental disorder or learning disorder, regardless of the cause or duration of the disorder.
- **Documented Disability:** a disability as defined herein, which has been verified by a relevant certified professional (qualified medical professional or registered psychologist) indicating that the disability is current.
- **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.
- **Duty to Accommodate:** the legal duty to accommodate a person's needs based on a protected ground (as defined by the *Alberta Human Rights Act*) to eliminate discriminatory effects upon students with disabilities.
- **Employee:** any person who is employed by MHC or who provides services to MHC under an employment contract.
- **Faculty:** an academic staff member employed by the College pursuant to the *Post-secondary Learning Act*.
- **Student:** any person enrolled in study at MHC.
- **Undue Hardship:** the point of accommodation that creates onerous conditions for the employer or service provider that could deem the accommodation to be unreasonable. This includes but is not limited to
 - (a) the added financial cost of accommodation hurts the viability of the service, program or MHC as a whole;
 - (b) health and safety concerns for the student seeking accommodation or for persons who might be affected by the accommodation including but not limited to staff and other students;
 - (c) interference with the opportunity of other students to achieve their academic goals; and
 - (d) the nature of the student's disability disallows them from attaining the bona-fide educational requirements or occupational requirements for the field of work connected to the program.

4. PRINCIPLES

- 4.1. MHC recognizes its legal obligation to accommodate students with a documented disability.

- 4.2. MHC undertakes to accommodate students with documented disabilities up to the point of undue hardship on MHC. Any decision by MHC not to accommodate at all, or only in part will be reasonable and justifiable.
- 4.3. MHC will make reasonable efforts to ensure that each of its employees support Academic Accommodation for students with documented disabilities in accordance with applicable law and this policy. MHC cannot dictate levels of accommodation provided by third party affiliates of MHC but undertakes to negotiate with such parties to arrive at an agreeable accommodation plan for the student consistent with law and this policy.
- 4.4. Students with documented disabilities and MHC have a duty to develop a successful Academic Accommodation Agreement.
- 4.5. The provision of Academic Accommodation shall not lower the academic standards of MHC. Academic Accommodation shall not remove the need for evaluation and the need to meet essential learning outcomes.
- 4.6. MHC where possible and where it can do so without compromising its academic standards, will adjust program/course loads, course requirements, examination procedures, timelines for completion or any other academic requirements to permit students with documented disabilities to complete their courses/programs.
- 4.7. The determination of any modification or accommodation is a shared responsibility. To determine the appropriate level of accommodation, consultation will take place with the student and the appropriate academic and student development personnel.
- 4.8. MHC is committed to maintaining confidentiality of the student in accordance with MHC policies and its legal obligations. (Data on the types of disabilities experienced by students is reported for statistical and government reporting purposes only. Personal identifying information is not provided and any information relating to the student is kept confidential).

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 Students will

- (a) follow the MHC Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities Procedure (PR-SD-05-01) to access specific service and academic accommodations,
- (b) pursue their studies with diligence and accept responsibility for their role in achieving course and program outcomes, and
- (c) engage in a dialogue with the appropriate faculty/instructional staff and Accessibility Services regarding any concerns with the recommended accommodations.

5.2 MHC Accessibility Services Coordinator will

- (a) administer and advise students and faculty on the MHC Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities Procedure (PR-SD-05-01) to determine appropriate and reasonable Academic Accommodations, and
- (b) ensure students understand established procedures to access specific services and Academic Accommodations.

5.3 Faculty will

- (a) assist in the implementation of Academic Accommodations for students as recommended by Accessibility Services, and
- (b) follow the MHC Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities Procedure (PR-SD-05-01) for implementation of Academic Accommodations.

6. APPLICABLE LEGISLATION/REGULATIONS

Alberta Human Rights Act
Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
Alberta Freedom of Information and Privacy Act
Post-secondary Learning Act

7. RELATED POLICIES

HR-01: Respectful Work and Learning Environment Policy
SD-04: Student Non-Academic Misconduct
AC-05: Final Exams

8. RELATED PROCEDURES

PR-SD-05-01: Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities Procedure
PR-HR-01-01: Respectful Work and Learning Environment Complaint Resolution
PR-SD-04-01: Student Non-Academic Misconduct

9. RELATED INFORMATION

Accessibility Services Handbook

ORIGINAL COPY SIGNED

Denise Henning
President and CEO

Date: March 16, 2017

ORIGINAL COPY SIGNED

Irlanda Price
Associate Vice-President, Student
Development

Date: March 16, 2017

DOCUMENT HISTORY

March 2017 Revised policy approved