



Medicine Hat College Policy

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Policy #:	SD-05
Policy Authority:	Director, Student Supports
Executive Sponsor:	Vice-President, Academic
Approved by:	President and CEO
Effective Date:	October 12, 2022
Next Mandatory Review Date:	October 12, 2027
Frequency of Review:	Every 5 years

1. OBJECTIVE

This policy defines the rights and responsibilities of Medicine Hat College (MHC), its employees, and students with verified disabilities with respect to Academic Accommodation at MHC.

2. 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 verified 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 involved in the academic accommodation process.

3. DEFINITIONS

- **Academic Accommodation:** making of adjustments or alternative arrangements in the educational environment to eliminate a discriminatory effect upon a student with a verified disability without compromising the academic integrity of the course, program, assignment, or lowering academic standards.
- **Academic Accommodation 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 this 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:** 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.
- **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.
- **Verified 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.

4. PRINCIPLES

MHC is committed to providing access and supports to diverse learners and recognizes its legal obligation to accommodate students with a verified disability.

5. DIRECTIVES

5.1 MHC undertakes to accommodate students with verified disabilities up to the point of undue hardship. Any decision by MHC to not accommodate at all, or only in part, will be reasonable and justifiable.

- 5.2 MHC will make reasonable efforts to ensure that each of its employees support academic accommodation for students with verified disabilities in accordance with applicable law and this policy.
- 5.3 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.
- 5.4 Students with verified disabilities and MHC have a duty to develop a successful Academic Accommodation Agreement.
- 5.5 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.
- 5.6 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 verified disabilities to complete their courses/programs.
- 5.7 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, faculty, and the Accessibility Services Coordinator.
- 5.8 Information collected falls under the Alberta FOIP Act, Section 33c and is protected under section 2 of the Act. 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.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 6.1 **Students** are responsible for
 - (a) following the MHC Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities Procedure (PR-SD-05-01) to access specific service and academic accommodations;
 - (b) fully understanding their obligations and the consequences of non-compliance of the MHC Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities Procedure;
 - (c) pursuing their studies with diligence and accept responsibility for their role in achieving course and program outcomes; and
 - (d) engaging in a dialogue with the appropriate faculty/instructional staff and Accessibility Services Coordinator regarding any concerns with the recommended accommodations.
- 6.2 **MHC Accessibility Services Coordinator** is responsible for
 - (a) administering and advising 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) ensuring students understand established procedures to access specific services and academic accommodations and the consequences of non-compliance.

6.3 **Faculty** is responsible for

- (a) assisting in the implementation of academic accommodations for students as recommended by the Accessibility Services Coordinator; and
- (b) following the MHC Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities Procedure (PR-SD-05-01) for implementation of academic accommodations.

7. APPLICABLE LEGISLATION/REGULATIONS

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

8. RELATED POLICIES

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

9. RELATED PROCEDURES

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

10. RELATED INFORMATION

Accessibility Services Handbook
Schedule A – Exam Time Request Schedule
Exam Information Form

ORIGINAL COPY SIGNED

Kevin Shufflebotham
President and CEO

Date: October 12, 2022

ORIGINAL COPY SIGNED

Clay Bos
Acting Vice-President, Academic

Date: October 12, 2022

DOCUMENT HISTORY

March 2017 Revised policy approved
October 2022 Revised policy approved