Academic Accommodations
Student Guide for Dalhousie University, Truro Campus
Access Supports: Applying for Academic Accommodations

1. Contact in person at Student Services or via email at scc@dal.ca.
2. Student meets and shares requested documentation.
3. Student meets to sign off on accommodation plan.
4. Student reviews Letter of Notification as emailed.
5. NS student registers w/ Student Loan for disability-related funding.
6. Student provides testing schedule, giving advance notice.
7. Student checks Dal email to confirm test location and time.
8. Student attends extra meetings, if needed.
What is Dalhousie’s Student Accommodation Policy?

The Student Accommodation Policy forms part of a broader, ongoing commitment to create a fully accessible university community, and acknowledges that, through dialogue, the university can better understand the nature and extent of campus barriers to accessibility. It is the responsibility of every member of the Dalhousie University community to be knowledgeable on institutional policies related to prohibited grounds for discriminatory practices and accessibility.

Pursuant to our obligations under human rights legislation, the purpose of this Policy is to affirm that Dalhousie University will make reasonable efforts to provide accommodations, up to the point of undue hardship, for students experiencing a barrier due to a characteristic protected by human rights legislation, and to establish a framework for managing requests by students for accommodation in an appropriate and timely manner.

Accommodations are intended to reduce or eliminate barriers to participation in academic and student life experienced by individual students due to characteristics protected under human rights legislation.

The full academic accommodation policy is available at:


The Nova Scotia Human Rights Act and additional information can be found at:

http://humanrights.gov.ns.ca/
What is an academic accommodation?

An academic accommodation is put into place to support a student who is experiencing a barrier related to a protected characteristic under Nova Scotia human rights legislation. An accommodation can be anything from extra time for writing exams to assistive technology for reading and writing.

Academic accommodations vary by student. They are intended to reduce or eliminate disadvantage as a result of a protected characteristic. Students receiving accommodations are still expected to meet the learning outcomes for their courses and programs.

Is self-disclosure necessary for academic accommodation?

Yes. To receive academic accommodations, self-disclosure of a disability to the Coordinator of Academic Accommodations is required.

We recognize the decision to self-disclose is a personal one which involves courage and trust. Some students are new to self-advocacy, perhaps having received a diagnosis recently. Others have been self-advocating in one form or another for some time.

Whichever your situation, we want you to know your information is maintained privately and confidentially. Communication by Student Services staff with professors is limited to the accommodations you are receiving. Your disability or protected characteristic is not shared. Further, parents/guardians are not provided updates about your accommodations or your progress, unless your written consent is received.

Can you tell me more about confidentiality at Dalhousie, Truro Campus?

Student Services staff maintain the standards of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPOP). FOIPOP governs a student’s right to protection of privacy of their personal information.

Both hard and electronic records are secured during your time of study at Dalhousie. These records are destroyed once an “expiry” date is reached.
How do I know if I am eligible for academic accommodations?

You are eligible for academic accommodations if experiencing a barrier due to...

- Acquired Brain Injury
- ADHD
- Autism Spectrum
- Chronic Health
- Learning Disability
- Mental Health
- Mobility
- Reduced Processing Speed
- Sensory Impairment (such as hearing loss, blindness, or low vision)
- and/or any other characteristic protected by Nova Scotia Human Rights legislation

And

- It is part of your Academic Accommodation Plan, as arranged ONLY by the Coordinator of Academic Accommodations and;
- It is stated in requested documentation that you have a disability or another protected characteristic and;
- The requested documentation also states that you require accommodations.

Parents/guardians are only provided updates with your written consent. 
Students are responsible for their academic accommodations.
What documentation is needed to apply for academic accommodations?

For reason of disability, two types of documentation are required to apply for academic accommodations.

The first of these is the Dalhousie, Truro Campus Accommodation Request form. This involves your personal statement regarding your disability, the barriers to learning encountered as a result of disability, and personal strengths that help you persevere when learning. The form is available from Student Services (Dairy Building) and online at:


Should you prefer to complete this paperwork with assistance, please schedule an appointment with the Coordinator of Academic Accommodations (scc@dal.ca).

The second type of required documentation is disability-specific. It involves information about your disability from the psychologist or physician responsible for your diagnosis and/or follow-up.

If you have a learning disability, a copy of a current (within the past five years) psycho-educational assessment completed by a registered psychologist is required. This document typically includes: a diagnosis, year of diagnosis, a listing of diagnostic tools used, background history, evidence of impairment in various settings, and recommendations for overcoming barriers to your learning. Any additional documentation related to your learning (such as from high school) is also beneficial. However, it is considered supplemental.

All other students applying for academic accommodations for reason of disability are required to have the Dalhousie, Truro Campus Medical Assessment form completed. The medical assessment provides opportunity for your physician to state your disability, identify impacts to learning, and offer suggestions for accommodations. This form is available at Student Services or online:

http://www.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/about/agricultural-campus/Student%20Services/DALAC%20Medical%20Assessment%20Form2015.pdf

To apply for academic accommodation for a protected characteristic other than disability (such as religious obligation), please contact Student Services directly.
How is an accommodation decision made?

The information from your personal statement as well as other requested documentation helps to inform the process for academic accommodations. After these documents are received at Student Services, the Coordinator of Academic Accommodations will be in touch to arrange an appointment. This meeting represents an important part of the accommodation process.

An accommodations plan will be developed taking into consideration the context of learning environments encountered at university and the learning outcomes of specific courses/programs. Recommendations from physicians, psychologists or other health-care practitioners are only one source of information amongst many considered in the development of an accommodation plan.

Once a protected characteristic is identified, the focus shifts to how can we reduce or eliminate the barrier? From time to time, we need to consult with others such as our colleagues at the Advising and Access Centre or the Office of Human Rights, Equity, and Harassment Prevention (both on the Halifax Campus) when reviewing an accommodation request.

How is an accommodation decision communicated to me and my instructors?

You and your professors will receive details of the accommodations plan by email. This plan is known as the Letter of Notification. Your disability/protected characteristic is kept confidential and is not shared with your professors, unless you choose to share with them yourself. Please take time to review your Letter of Notification to ensure familiarity with its content.

Would it be helpful to meet with my instructors about my accommodations?

Yes, it would. Instructors have specialized knowledge of the courses they teach as well as the workload flow during the semester. Meeting about your accommodation needs directly and having a plan to handle challenges that may arise in advance of them happening is important. Please refer to additional information about self-advocacy later in this booklet.
If I want to use my testing accommodations, how do I go about that?

To use your accommodations for a test, please notify the Coordinator of Academic Accommodations of your testing schedule by email or in-person. Advance notice is strongly recommended, such as upon receipt of course outlines/syllabi. We appreciate that some courses involve shorter notice for tests. As such, a **minimum of seven** working days’ notice (for example, Thursday, the week before a Friday test) is required for test accommodations.

When and where do I go on testing day?

Tests start at the regular class time, unless other arrangements have been made in advance with your professor **and** communicated to the Coordinator of Academic Accommodations.

The Coordinator will send you an email notification via Microsoft Outlook of the test time and location. For your testing notice to show accurately, ensure your clock is set to Atlantic Standard Time. Please come to Student Services for your test, unless other arrangements have been made.

What if I am sick and cannot write my test?

If sick and unable to write your test, notify your instructor along with the Coordinator of Academic Accommodations. It is the instructor’s decision whether or not the test can be rescheduled. If rescheduling is permitted by the instructor, please then contact the Coordinator to make alternate test arrangements.

How often do I need to complete a request for academic accommodation?

Students are required to complete the request for academic accommodation form once each semester, and more frequently if requesting a change in accommodation.
What is self-advocacy?

Self-advocacy involves taking an active role when communicating, problem-solving, and decision-making about issues important to you. Effective self-advocates understand their disability, learning strengths and challenges. They are prepared to speak for themselves, ask and negotiate for what they need, as well as make use of available resources.

Why is self-advocacy at university important?

Self-advocacy is an important part of transitioning into adulthood. It is also a component of student success that has been shown to lead to improved quality of life and positive adult outcomes.

Speaking to instructors early in the semester demonstrates you are being responsible when it comes to your learning goals and progress. This helps create a positive foundation should you need to speak with your instructor in the future.

What are some questions to consider about my readiness to self-advocate?

- Do I know my learning strengths (what I do well)?
- Do I know my learning challenges and how I overcome or reduce them?
- Do I know my rights and responsibilities regarding accommodation?
- Am I comfortable communicating my needs to others?
- Have I received practice and coaching about effective self-advocacy?
- Where can I go for help with self-advocacy and learning strategies?

Student Services staff (Access Supports) have resources to help you discover more about your learning style, strengths and challenges, as well as strategies to help improve your academic experience. Access Supports is also where you can learn more about effective self-advocacy and receive some coaching.
Is self-disclosure of disability to my instructors required?

No. Disclosure of your disability to your instructors remains a personal choice.

Some students find it helpful to meet with some or all their instructors and describe the types of learning strengths and challenges they experience, even if they do not disclose their specific disability.

What if I am still uncomfortable with self-disclosure to my instructors?

Self-disclosure to your instructors is not required to receive academic accommodations.

If you are new to self-advocacy, take small steps. Start by self-disclosing with supportive people you already know. Consider following up with the Coordinator of Academic Accommodations to gain some additional strategies for self-advocacy. Some suggestions for effective communication with instructors can be found on the following page of this booklet.

What if I didn’t disclose my disability before – but I want to do so now?

It is okay to change your mind!

Student Services is open year-round to support students in various ways including arranging academic accommodations. Remember, however, it takes time to arrange academic accommodations. There are also deadlines for disability-related funding.

Please give as much notice as possible so these processes can work for you.
What are some suggestions for meeting with my instructor(s)?

Before meeting:

- Understand and know how to discuss your strengths and challenges.
- Prepare in advance for the meeting.
- Find an appropriate time and place. Consider scheduling an appointment during an instructor’s office hours. Do not try to explain your needs as an instructor is entering or leaving class.
- Ask to meet with your instructor(s) within the first two weeks of class or as soon as possible after a barrier to your learning is identified.

At the meeting:

- Go to the meeting with a positive attitude.
- Be on time.
- State the reason for the meeting.
- Be as specific as possible about your accommodation needs.
- Take turns talking. Speak and listen without interrupting.
- For understanding, repeat in your own words what you think is being said.
- Bring notes and/or your Letter of Notification to guide the conversation.
- Ask to meet again if you have further concerns, questions, or need support.
- End the meeting with a “thank you.”

After meeting:

- Give the instructor time to meet your requests.
- Work together to find solutions should future challenges arise.
- If you have followed the suggestions for meeting with instructors and you still have concerns, ask to meet with the instructor again and contact the Coordinator of Academic Accommodations at scc@dal.ca.
This booklet is intended to support communication that will take place between you and the Coordinator of Academic Accommodations (Access Supports) at Dalhousie University, Truro Campus. Whether making inquiries, or moving forward with the academic accommodation process, Student Services staff is here to help.

If at any time questions arise, please feel free to contact the Coordinator by email at scc@dal.ca, by phone (902)896-2463, or in person at Dalhousie University, Truro Campus, Dairy Building, 11 River Road, Truro, Nova Scotia.

You can learn more about Student Services, Dalhousie University, Truro Campus, online at:
http://www.dal.ca/aboutdal/agriculturalcampus/studentservices.html

Feedback about this document is welcome and appreciated. Please forward your comments to the Coordinator at scc@dal.ca.