

 <b>DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY</b>  <b>STUDENT ACCOMMODATION POLICY</b>	<i>Policy Sponsor:</i> Provost	<i>Approval Date:</i> Senate: February 10, 2014 Board: June 24, 2014
	<i>Responsible Unit:</i> Student Accessibility Centre	<i>Revisions:</i> Senate: October 27, 2014 November 27, 2017 Board: November 25, 2014 October 16, 2018 University Secretary (as delegated): April 25, 2019

#### A. Background & Purpose

This 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 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.

#### B. **Application**

This policy applies to academic and non-academic activity engaged in by students at, on behalf of, in connection with or under the auspices of the University.

Affirmative Action measures and programs aimed at correcting historic disadvantage for designated groups fall under distinct programs and do not form part of this policy.

Allegations of discrimination are addressed under the Statement on Prohibited Discrimination and the applicable procedures.

### **C. Definitions**

In this Policy:

“Centre” means the Student Accessibility Centre, Student Affairs;

“student” means an individual registered in a course at the University, including the College of Continuing Education, but excluding residents in postgraduate medical or dental education programs;

“University activity” means an academic or non-academic activity conducted at, on behalf of, in connection with, or under the auspices of the University.

### **D. Policy**

1. Students experiencing barriers to participation in a University activity due to a characteristic protected under human rights legislation are entitled to accommodation to reduce or eliminate such barriers up to the point of undue hardship, as set out in this Policy.
2. All members of the University community share in the responsibility for compliance with this policy.
3. Students are encouraged to seek accommodation where they believe that they are experiencing a barrier to participation in a University activity, due to a characteristic protected under human rights legislation, which may be reduced or eliminated through accommodation.
4. All requests for accommodation shall be made by the student to the Centre in accordance with the Procedures and with all Guidelines and Protocols published by the Centre.
5. Accommodation requests shall be made prior to the University activity in question. There shall be no “after-the-fact” accommodation except in rare circumstances where significant psychological or mental health issues arise coincident with the activity in question.
6. Accommodation decisions will be reviewed on a regular basis and adjusted to the student’s then current circumstances where necessary.
7. Accommodation decisions may be appealed by the student to the Provost and Vice-President Academic or delegate in accordance with the Procedures, and with the Guidelines and Protocols established by the Centre.
8. All documentation relating to a request for accommodation, including supporting documentation, shall be treated as strictly confidential, and shall not be disclosed to other persons without the consent of the student requesting the accommodation, except to the extent that such disclosure is necessary for the effective implementation of the accommodation decision or appeal of that decision.

9. Nothing in this Policy or Procedures shall take away from the student's right to seek the assistance of the applicable Human Rights Commission.

#### **E. Administrative Structure**

1. Authority: This Policy and Procedures falls under the authority of the Provost and Vice-President Academic. The Centre is responsible for the day to day administration of this Policy and Procedures.
2. Guidelines and Protocols: Guidelines and Protocols published by the Centre will support the Policy and Procedures and facilitate the Centre's responsibility to administer the Policy.
3. Record-keeping: The Centre shall track and monitor data relating to accommodation requests, accommodation appeals, accommodation plans, and other matters relating to student accommodation.
4. Reporting: The Centre shall deliver an annual report to the Vice-Provost, Student Affairs and the Senate Committee on Learning and Teaching which will include:
  - a. Number of accommodation requests;
  - b. Representation of the nature of the requests and program of study;
  - c. Number of appeals and summary of decisions; and
  - d. Any service challenges or other issues presented.
5. Ongoing Training: Employees involved in administering this Policy and Procedures will participate in regular training on applicable human rights issues by the Human Rights and Equity Advisor, a minimum of once annually.

#### **F. Procedures**

1. Request for Accommodation: A request for accommodation shall be made by the student to the Centre prior to the University activity in question in accordance with Guidelines and Protocols established by the Centre.
2. Preliminary Assessment: The Centre shall make a preliminary assessment of the request to determine the nature of the barrier experienced by the student and the connection of that barrier to a characteristic protected by human rights legislation. If both cannot be established then the request shall be denied.
3. Factors to be Considered: Where an accommodation is to be provided, it must be reasonable, up to the point of undue hardship. The relevant factors to be taken into account in determining a reasonable accommodation will include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - a) Linkage – whether the proposed accommodation will have the practical effect of eliminating or reducing the identified barrier;
  - b) Safety – whether the proposed accommodation would pose a safety risk to faculty, staff or other students or to the student seeking accommodation;

- c) Financial Cost – whether the anticipated expenses (estimated out-of-pocket expenses to put the accommodation in place together with any long-term expenses to sustain the proposed accommodation), are likely to be cost-prohibitive;
- d) Size and nature of the program or service – whether the proposed accommodation would be exceedingly disruptive to the program or service, taking into consideration the number of students, faculty, staff and others affected as well as the nature and inter-relationships of their roles;
- e) Impact on academic requirements – whether the proposed accommodation will substantially undermine the academic requirements of the program; and
- f) Alternatives – where a requested accommodation appears to create an undue hardship based on the above factors, whether an alternative accommodation may be available.

4. Consultation and Decision: Having regard for the factors set out in section F.3, and following consultation, as appropriate to the circumstances, with:
- a. the student;
  - b. the course instructor in the case of an academic accommodation;
  - c. the clinical coordinator in the case of an accommodation in a clinical placement;
  - d. the administrator responsible for the University activity in question;
  - e. administrators responsible for coordinating accommodations in professional Faculties; and/or
  - f. others that may be warranted by the circumstances;

the Centre will decide what accommodation will be provided.

5. Objection to decision: If a student disagrees with the accommodation decision, the student should attempt to resolve the matter through informal discussions with the Centre.
6. Appeal: If the student's objection cannot be resolved, the student may appeal the decision by filing a written appeal to the Provost and Vice-President Academic within 10 calendar days of the date that the Centre made its final decision in accordance with the Guidelines or Protocols established by the Centre. The Provost and Vice-President Academic may designate an Associate Vice-President Academic to act in their place. The Provost and Vice-President Academic or designate may uphold the initial accommodation decision, or may determine that an alternative form of accommodation should be provided. This decision is final, and cannot be appealed further.