

Undergraduate Medical Student Accommodations Manual

Dalhousie Medicine
Undergraduate Medical Education
Student Affairs
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Introduction

Undergraduate Medical Student Accommodations Manual

The Faculty of Medicine aligns with the ongoing commitment at Dalhousie to create a fully accessible university community. Embedded in this commitment is the recognition that Dalhousie is obliged to support learners who may require accommodation 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 range of potential accommodation required for medical learners is broad and it is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of examples. Such may include simple accommodation for extra time in exams based on medical conditions such as attention deficit disorder, or more complex accommodation related to accessibility in the clinical learning environment. Student Affairs, Undergraduate Medical Education (UGME), and the Student Accessibility Center each have a role to play in assisting you with accommodation during undergraduate training. This manual is designed to inform you of essential elements of process and provide contact information to encourage discussion at any point in undergraduate training.

Confidentiality

Requests for accommodation, including supporting documentation, should be treated as strictly confidential, and should not be disclosed to other people without your consent ***except to the extent*** that such disclosure is necessary for the effective implementation of your accommodation plan.

For the full confidentiality policy please see the Dalhousie University Student [Accessibility Centre Website](#).

Student Accessibility Centre (SAC)

The SAC works collaboratively with students, faculty, and staff to create an inclusive educational environment for all learners. The Centre is responsible for administering the university-wide [Student Accommodation Policy](#) working across all programs and faculties, Dalhousie Faculty of Medicine campuses including DMNS, DMNB and CBMC.

What we do at the SAC

- Work with students 1:1 to create individualized accessibility plans that help reduce or remove barriers they experience related to a protected characteristic in the NS Human Rights Act.
- Facilitate access to academic courses and programs, facilities, services, and activities.
- Identify classroom, exam (written, lab, OSCE) and other accommodations (e.g. clerkship) to reduce barriers to your learning.
- Advocate on behalf of, and alongside you, to ensure reasonable accommodations are available and implemented.
- Assist you in accessing funding for students with disabilities.
- Connect you with on- and off-campus resources to enhance your success.

To facilitate this work, we:

- Work with you via email and scheduled appointments (booked [online](#) or by calling 902-494-2836) throughout and at any stage in your program from entry to graduation.
- Maintain confidentiality of accommodations related information and associated documentation. Documentation is not required to begin a conversation about possible accommodations, and we will advise you of what documentation is required to support your request.
- Assist you in understanding university policies, regulations, and procedures related to accessibility.
- Collaborate with Dalhousie Medicine Student Affairs and UGME with your consent and where required for accommodation implementation.
- Provide support that recognizes and considers your personal experiences, values and goals and encourages your active engagement in the creation of your accessibility plan.
- Require you to renew your accessibility plan annually by submitting a renewal request in Accommodate and recommend meeting with your access advisor if you wish to review your plan or request any changes.

Contact Us

Email: access@dal.ca

Phone: 902-494-2836

[Click here](#) to book directly

Accommodation Process

Register with SAC and submit your accommodation request, or questions as early as possible prior to the start of the academic year, or at any point during your training if questions arise regarding accommodation. On occasion, the impact of learning differences in medical training may lead to your first experience with academic difficulty. You are encouraged to reach out with any questions. Students with pre-existing accommodation from other studies or work are encouraged to proactively review their needs for medical school.

If you are unsure whether you may require accommodation, please [schedule](#) a confidential meeting with an SAC staff member via the online scheduling system noted above. There is an SAC Advisor for the Faculty of Medicine, and they will work with you on accommodation scenarios.

You may also discuss any questions confidentially with Student Affairs who can offer guidance including directions to the SAC.

Requesting Accommodations

1. **Complete and submit a request** for accommodation through the SAC's [Accommodate Software](#). If you require any support during this step, please reach out to access@dal.ca (log in required with your NetID and password). This will prompt you to **book your mandatory intake appointment** with your SAC advisor, via the online scheduling link noted above, to discuss your request. Appointments are conducted in person or virtually.
2. **Submit any supporting documentation** if available, for review through the Centre's Accommodate Software (log in required with your NetID, not your alias). Note: it is not essential to submit documentation in advance of an intake appointment.
3. With your consent, SAC may collaborate with UGME, SA, and the relevant Health Authority for robust review and development of accommodation suited to your individual case, especially regarding accommodation for clinical work.
4. **Follow all steps throughout the process as reviewed with SAC team member**
5. If your accommodation is approved by the SAC, your advisor will confirm your accommodation(s) and notify you of the specifics of your accommodation.
6. Upon receipt of this notice, you are to log into Accommodate, click on "Accommodation", then "Accommodation Renewal" (even if it is the first time) and complete in full. Test/exam scheduling can only be made after this renewal is done and approved.
7. You must review the completed accommodation package carefully to ensure all elements are covered. If any discrepancy is noted, reach out to SAC for clarification.
8. Please note, until you "confirm" your accommodation, no information is shared with UGME, and your accommodation cannot be operationalized.
9. Once your accommodation is confirmed by you online, the SAC will circulate your accommodation to the relevant support staff at UGME for operationalization of your accommodation, and Student Affairs for their information.
10. UGME will operationalize your accommodation (see below for DMNS, DMNB and CBMC specific information as processes may differ per campus).
11. **A reminder that you are responsible for logging into *Accommodate* to activate your accommodation plan ideally 8 weeks in advance of the start of each academic year.**
12. Clinical experience accessibility plans are typically documented as a letter from the SAC to UGME with copy to Student Affairs. Please see page 8 for more information.

Please note important campus specific details on the following page.

Operationalizing Exam Accommodations

DMNS only:

Students can (*and are encouraged to*) reserve their full year of accommodated exams in advance, a separate request for each in-person exam is required to write with their accommodation and must be done so at least **7 days** in advance of the exam with the exception of OSCEs which require **8 weeks** advance notice, see below for OSCE process.

Please use this link to schedule an exam with accommodations:

[Schedule an Accommodated Quiz, Test, Exam - Academic Support - Dalhousie University](#)

The following written and/or lab exam accommodations must be written in-person at a designated testing location determined by the SAC:

- 1. Pre-Clerkship**

Exam accommodation for extra time, breaks, distraction-reduced environment, own room at Student Accessibility Centre, etc.

- 2. Clerkship Formative Exams (written remotely)**

Use of scrap paper, own room at Student Accessibility Centre

*If you are an LIC student, we will work with the site coordinator to arrange invigilation at the site

- 3. Clerkship Summative Exams (written in Halifax)**

Exam accommodation for extra time, breaks, distraction-reduced environment, own room at Student Accessibility Centre, etc.

**Please note, the exam booking software is only open from September 1st to April 30th. For any exam requests outside of this date, please email your SAC Accommodations Advisor directly.*

Please note, exams that take place in the month of December or April need to be submitted at least 3 weeks before the start of the regular university exam period, this date can be found [here](#) or speak with your accommodations advisor

DMNB & CBMC only:

The following written and/or lab exam accommodations must be written in-person; DMNB students will be advised of their writing location no later than one week before their exams.

- 1. Pre-Clerkship**

Exam accommodation requiring extra time, breaks, distraction-reduced environment, or own room

- 2. Clerkship Formative Exams (written remotely)**

When use of scrap paper is part of the accommodation plan, students doing block in Saint John must write at DMNB or CBMC as appropriate.

*If you are an LIC student, we will work with the site coordinator to arrange invigilation at the site.

- 3. Clerkship Summative Exams (written in Saint John or Sydney as appropriate)**

Exam accommodation requiring extra time, breaks, distraction-reduced environment, own room

OSCE Accommodation:

OSCE accommodations are unique compared to written examinations, as more complex logistics may need to be implemented affecting timing of stations, number of examiners needed and track details. OSCE accommodation will be shared with the planning and operations team at the relevant site (i.e. C3LR/LRC) confidentially on a need-to-know basis. This information is sent directly from UGME to the skills centres, 8 weeks in advance. Depending on the nature of the accommodation, the examiners will not necessarily be aware of the details of the accommodation.

There may be emergent circumstances where you need an accommodation for an OSCE within 8 weeks of the exam. In this situation, the OSCE planning team will do their best to implement the accommodation(s) into the scheduled OSCE time. If they cannot do so in a way to ensure a fair exam for you, your exam will be rescheduled in most cases to the OSCE deferral date, however it will not be considered a “deferral” for purposes of progress and promotions.

Clinical Educational Experience

(i.e. electives, family medicine experience, rural week, clerkship accommodation):

Accommodations for students in clinical educational experiences will vary. The student is responsible for initiating accommodations and should do so in as timely a way as possible. For complex clinical placement accommodations in clerkship for example, such discussions should begin in pre-clerkship, ideally no later than the winter of med 2 to ensure plans can be developed and implemented.

While respecting confidentiality on medical diagnoses, collaboration may be required with any of the following, depending on the context: the student, SAC, UGME staff, Assistant Deans Skilled Clinician, Pre-Clerkship, Clerkship, Student Affairs, Clerkship Directors and/or their designate within a Health Authority to ensure a robust accessibility plan is developed and operationalized.

The SAC Advisor is responsible for preparing a letter outlining the specifics of any clinical experience accommodation and for sharing this with UGME/SA. UGME is then responsible for ensuring communication of the accommodation letter to relevant clinical administrators and leads. Student consent is obtained for each level of communication and collaboration.

Clerkship Exceptional Placements

The Undergraduate Medical Education (UGME) program aims to match students to clerkship placements that balance program capacity, accreditation standards, and learner needs. Here are the two types of placements:

Block Rotations: Students rotate through different specialties and hospitals (e.g., Internal Medicine, Surgery, Pediatrics, etc.) which may involve travel across multiple sites.

Longitudinal Integrated Clerkship (LIC): Students remain in one location for the full year, completing all required rotations in an integrated fashion, usually with the core same preceptor(s) or care team.

Clerkship Exceptional Placement Requests

There may be exceptional circumstances that fall under the protected characteristics in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms requiring accommodation and precluding students from being placed in certain locations. Characteristics currently protected in Nova Scotia and are applicable to all Dalhousie Medicine students include:

- age
- race
- colour

- religion
- creed
- sex (includes pregnancy, gender identity, and gender expression)
- sexual orientation
- gender identify
- physical disability or mental disability
- an irrational fear of contracting an illness or disease
- ethnic, national, or aboriginal origin
- family status
- marital status
- source of income
- political belief, affiliation, or activity,
- that individual's association with another individual or class of individuals having characteristics referred to above.

Students may request exceptional placement accommodation in advance of the selection survey.

Clerkship exceptional placement information will be distributed in October. Requests must be submitted to the Student Accessibility Centre (SAC). While students can apply for accommodation related to clerkship placement anytime in the fall of their med 2 year, students must apply 3 weeks prior to the selection survey opening. The deadline is typically around mid-November.

Students are encouraged to meet with Student Affairs and/ or a representative from the Black Health and Indigenous Health offices for guidance before submitting their request to the SAC to discuss the process and potentially required supplemental support. This may include medical documentation such as a note from a health care provider. The exceptional placement request should also include a letter from the student outlining the exceptional circumstances and what barriers exist that may be overcome by accommodation in placement.

Exceptional Placement Request may include:

CBMC	DMNB	DMNS
Requesting or avoiding a specific location	Requesting or avoiding a specific location	Requesting or avoiding a specific location
Requesting or avoiding a specific LIC site	Requesting Block or LIC clerkship style	Requesting Block or LIC clerkship style
Only placements in Cape Breton Regional Municipality		No LIC sites and within 200 km of the Tupper Building
		No LIC sites and within 100 km of the Tupper Building
		Only placements in Halifax Regional Municipality

		Requesting or avoiding a specific track or LIC site
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All exceptional placement requests are reviewed by the Student Accessibility Centre (SAC) in consultation with the student. After review, the SAC will inform students of their decision before the survey results are finalized. In the case of Black/Indigenous student requests, should the SAC or the student feel that they require further guidance, they may consult with the Academic Directors for the BLAP/IAP to provide more context around this.

Should a student wish to appeal the decision, the following excerpt from the Student Accommodation Policy outlines the process:

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.

Med 4 and Med 5 Electives at “Away” schools

Med 4 Dalhousie students attending electives at “away” schools would follow the same procedure as for a Med 3 rotation accommodation: A letter written by SAC noting the accommodation would be shared with UGME, UGME would send the letter to appropriate faculty/staff who will be working with the student during their away rotation, as identified by the student. The student should be prepared to speak to their accommodation during the elective if necessary for any handover or clarity for implementation of the accommodation.

Requesting Renewal, Change, or Additional Accommodation

Complete and submit a Renewal form for accommodation through the SAC's Accommodate Software. If you require any support during this step, please reach out to Student Affairs or the SAC (log in required with your NetID and password).

If you are requesting changes or additions, **submit Request Changes form for review** through the centre's Accommodate Software portal (log in required with your NetID and password). A meeting with your Accommodations Advisor to review and assess your request is required.

Accommodation Responsibilities

The following chart outlines the various roles involved in the accommodations process and how they interact together.

Steps	Learner	SAC Advisor	Student Affairs	UGME	Preceptor/ Relevant Teaching Staff
1. Request Accommodations with Student Accessibility Centre (See page 5 for more information)	Responsible	-	Assist/provide support if needed	-	-
2. Assess Accommodation needs across pre-clerkship and clerkship	Consulted	Responsible	Assist/Provide support if needed	Informed and may be consulted for collaboration with SAC for more complex situations	-
3. SAC will write a letter of accommodations to UGME	Informed and copied on letter	Responsible	Informed and copied on letter	Informed	-
4. Communicate accommodation needs to relevant teaching staff	Informed, may need to speak to the assigned preceptor/service	Assist/ Provide support if needed	Assist/ Provide support if needed	Responsible	Informed
5. Implement/operationalize accommodations	Consulted	Assist/ Provide support if needed	Informed	Responsible	Responsible
6. If applicable: apply for and secure exam accommodation for each exam including cue sheets (See page 7 for more information)	Responsible	Informed	Assist/ Provide support if needed, informed	Informed	May be informed if needed depending on the accommodation and exam
7. Monitor, evaluate, communicate, and modify as necessary	Responsible	Responsible	Responsible	Responsible	Responsible

Areas of Expertise

Learner	SAC Advisor	Administrative Staff (UGME/Student Affairs)	Preceptors/Relevant teaching staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Own disability and lived experience(s) Knowledge of past accommodations and what has worked before Strengths and areas of support required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Best practices on accommodations Legal responsibilities & University policies and procedures Reviewing medical documentation Expertise on the functional impacts of disability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department and faculty policies and procedures Core competencies and program requirements Expertise on accreditation requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Core competencies and learning objectives Knowledge of the placement site

Types of Accommodations

Each student's accessibility plan will be unique to their needs and experiences and could include a number of accommodations, as well as recommendations for and referrals to things like assistive technology, or other campus and community services and supports. Please visit the [SAC website](#) for detailed information on some of the more common accommodations.

Common types of accommodations

Categories

1. Classroom
2. Lab/Tutorial
3. Exam/Assessment
4. Clinical
5. Other

Accessible Parking

DMNS

Accessible parking passes are available to students who have reduced mobility or a chronic disability that prevents their ability to use non-accessible parking spaces. These passes authorize parking in designated spaces.

Students who experience mobility impairments and wish to apply for a Dalhousie accessible parking space must:

1. [Submit a request for accommodation](#) through the Student Accessibility Centre.
2. [Book an appointment](#) to discuss the request with a Student Access Advisor.

The Student Accessibility Centre will review your request alongside your supporting documentation and liaise with Security Services as appropriate. **If you are approved for an accessible parking permit, the Student Accessibility Centre will reach out with additional details.**

Students who require reserved spaces in specific lots must pay the regular parking rate for the lot they are requesting (as do all parking tenants in that lot). However, Security Services will mark such spaces as reserved, so it is available for your use only. Parking passes are provided on an annual basis only (September 1-August 31) and will not be pro-rated.

DMNB

Students with an accessible parking tag have access to UNB/Horizon Health publicly designated accessible parking spots on the UNB Campus and at the Saint John Regional Hospital; individually reserved parking spots are not available. Students with concerns about parking should reach out to Student and Resident Affairs, DMNB.

CBMC

Students with an accessible parking zone permit have access to publicly designated accessible parking spots on CBU's Campus and any NS Health Authority spaces across the province. If you have not yet applied for permanent and temporary Accessible Parking Identification Permits can be issued at all Registry of Motor Vehicle [locations](#) in Nova Scotia.

Temporary Accommodation

The process to request temporary accommodation is outlined in the [Request Accommodation](#) section.

Checklist

- ☐ Register with the Student Accessibility Centre and provide all necessary documentation.
- ☐ Schedule an intake appointment (to request accommodations) or a review meeting (to make changes to your existing accessibility plan/accommodations)
- ☐ Provide any requested documentation to SAC for confidential storage.
- ☐ Follow all steps in the process with SAC, ensure you read all related correspondence and follow through on steps required to finalize any accommodation.
- ☐ Once you receive your accessibility plan from SAC, review it carefully and ensure all expected elements are noted.
- ☐ If any discrepancy is noted, reach back to SAC to discuss and ensure clarification.
- ☐ Communicate with instructors and appropriate administrative staff (UGME/SA) about your accommodation needs and book follow-up meetings with SAC advisor to revise your accommodation as needed.
- ☐ DMNS only: Request exam accommodation space, in advance for each exam if writing in the SAC. Please see page 7 for full process.
- ☐ Connect with Black Student Supports; Promoting Leadership in African Nova Scotians (PLANS) and, or Indigenous Student Supports; Keknu'tmasiek Ta'n Tel Welo'ltimk (KW) at any time.
- ☐ Connect with other appropriate services when recommended by the SAC or Student Affairs.
- ☐ Explore financial aid options that may help with disability-related educational costs.

Additional Support Offices

Student Affairs Office, Faculty of Medicine

The Office of Student Affairs provides personal and academic support and advice to learners throughout Medical School. Your privacy is important to us. All information you share about yourself will be kept strictly CONFIDENTIAL and will not be shared with anyone outside our office without your written consent. *

**Legal exceptions include the following:*

clear and imminent danger to you or someone else, a reasonable concern that a child or elder is being abused or a court order.

What we do

Student Affairs meets with students for confidential advising that includes discussion of pre-existing or emergent needs for accommodation. Student Affairs reaches out to any student experiencing exam failure to review academic support. It may be at such time that learning differences or other barriers to learning are identified and discussion with the Student Accessibility Center is advised. Conversely, students may be connected to Student

Affairs for support on the recommendation of the Student Accessibility Center if the student may have started a conversation there initially. Advocacy and support are key tenets of Student Affairs work. With students' permission, SA collaborates with UGME and SAC to serve the student requiring accommodation.

[**Student Affairs Office - Dalhousie University**](#)

[**Contact Us - Student Affairs Office - Dalhousie University**](#)

[**Indigenous health – Serving & Engaging Society - Dalhousie University**](#)

Related support services for Indigenous students.

[**Black Health \(PLANS\) – Serving & Engaging Society - Dalhousie University**](#)

Related support services for Black students.

Undergraduate Medical Education

Undergraduate Medical Education (UGME) designs, develops and oversees Dalhousie's accredited four-year MD program.

An expert team skilled in medical education, curriculum development, instructional design, clinical care, and health information collaborated in the development of our new four-year MD program. The curriculum draws upon established best practices in medical education and practice, both at the national and international levels, and student input continues to provide invaluable insight into our program.

The approach to teaching and learning is patient-centered through case-based learning involving students learning in small groups. Although the curriculum is clinically driven, the program is designed to provide students with opportunities to gain a strong foundation in the basic and medical sciences.

[**MD Program - Undergraduate Medical Education - Dalhousie University**](#)

[**Contact Us - Undergraduate Medical Education - Dalhousie University**](#)