

Learner accommodation procedure

Parent policy

Learner Accommodation Policy 500-1-4

Purpose

The purpose of this Procedure is to inform learners of the detailed procedure for providing inclusive practices through the application of principles of Universal Design, Universal Design for Learning, and Accommodations. The Procedure outlines the shared responsibilities of Bow Valley College and learners to whom the college owes a duty to accommodate to the point of undue hardship based on protected grounds.

Scope

This Procedure applies to learners, employees, and representatives of Bow Valley College within all campuses, course/program delivery modalities, activities, services, and facilities.

Compliance

Members of the college community must know, understand, and comply with college policies, procedures, and associated materials that relate to their position, employment, enrolment, or other relationship with the college.

Procedures

1. General
 - 1.1. The request for reasonable accommodation is a collaborative process between the college and learners to whom a duty to accommodate is owed by the college based on protected grounds. In providing accommodations, Bow Valley College will ensure that the dignity, privacy, and autonomy of the learners are respected.
 - 1.2. Faculty shall include a statement in their syllabus indicating their willingness to assist in the provision of academic accommodations, informing learners of the role of Student Services and the college's responsibility to provide necessary academic accommodations, and the learner's responsibility to identify their need for accommodation in a timely manner.
 - 1.3. It is the responsibility of the learner requesting accommodation on the basis of protected grounds to do so as soon as possible once they are admitted to their program of study. Failure to provide proper notice may result in limited options and/or a delay in the commencement of studies. There may be times when a learner's ability to request accommodation presents a barrier to the timely request, and this will be taken into consideration.
 - 1.4. When a member of the college community becomes aware that there is an adverse impact on the learner's ability to participate in college activities based on protected grounds, the member of the college community has a duty to inquire with the learner about this possible need for accommodation, or further accommodations, and to make a referral to Student Services.
 - 1.5. Learners may request accommodations on the basis of protected grounds in connection with activities that may include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - 1.5.1. barriers to accessing learning materials.
 - 1.5.2. barriers to completing learner assessments in the prescribed format of the course.
 - 1.5.3. observation of major religious or spiritual holy days, celebrations, or ceremonies
 - 1.5.4. prayer
 - 1.5.5. smudging or Indigenous ceremonies
 - 1.5.6. dietary requirements and/or fasting
 - 1.5.7. religious attire
 - 1.5.8. ablution (e.g., washing of hands, face, and feet)

- 1.5.9. participation in daily activities and curriculum
 - 1.6. The college will make reasonable effort to avoid scheduling in-class or formal examinations on days of special religious significance throughout the year through a universal design for learning approach. When scheduling conflicts do arise, it is the responsibility of the learner to request an accommodation as soon as possible after being provided with the information necessary to identify a conflict.
 - 1.7. All parties have a responsibility to engage in thoughtful, open minded, and respectful dialogue while determining reasonable accommodation.
2. Determining accommodations for learners under protected grounds
 - 2.1. Bow Valley college has designated Student Services responsible for determining accommodations for students under all protected grounds.
 - 2.2. The learner shall make a request to Student Services to initiate the process through an intake meeting.
 - 2.3. Learners seeking accommodations for mental and/or physical disability-related barriers must submit documentation from a licensed professional describing the nature of the disability and explaining its functional impact(s).
 - 2.3.1. Documentation is used by Student Services as a guide to determine reasonable and justifiable accommodations.
 - 2.3.2. Requests submitted without supporting documentation will not be considered complete until documentation is received.
 - 2.4. Learners seeking accommodations under protected grounds other than disability shall:
 - 2.4.1. identify the protected ground that gives rise to the need for inclusive practices and/or accommodation,
 - 2.4.2. provide details on the nature of the accommodation requested, and
 - 2.4.3. provide supporting documentation, if requested.
 - 2.5. Submission of a request attests to the fact that the learner is submitting a *bona fide* claim.
 - 2.6. In consultation with the learner, Student Services will review the documentation, identify necessary academic adjustments and services, and determine the accommodations that will best meet the needs of the learner. Accommodations will be made using the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) wherever possible.
 - 2.7. No such adaptations or accommodations will eliminate the need of the learner to meet the essential skills or *bona fide* educational requirements of a program. The college will provide justification for any essential skill or *bona fide* educational requirement in question.
 - 2.8. Where UDL practices cannot meet the needs of the learner, accommodations will be provided on an individual basis in an individual accommodation plan.
 - 2.9. No request for accommodation under protected grounds will be considered where it is made after a missed examination or assignment or other college activity in the absence of special circumstances justifying the failure to seek accommodation in advance.
 - 2.10. In the event that an accommodation request is denied, Student Services staff will outline the reasons for this both through verbal communication and in a letter to the learner.
 3. Implementing accommodations
 - 3.1. Once an accommodation plan has been agreed upon between Student Services and the learner, it is the responsibility of the learner to inform the relevant members of the college community of the individual accommodation plan.
 - 3.2. Principles of Universal Design for Learning will be implemented wherever possible. These may include (but are not limited to):
 - 3.2.1. Providing multiple types of materials for all learners to access course content (ex. written, audio, video, visual representations)
 - 3.2.2. Recording classes and posting recordings for all learners to access.
 - 3.2.3. Providing course notes, slides, and information to all learners before class

- 3.2.4. Allowing choice and alternative assessment practices for all learners
 - 3.2.5. Allowing extended or unlimited time for quizzes, tests, and exams for all learners
 - 3.2.6. Creating a space where all learners feel welcome to be their authentic selves and are invited to participate in an inclusive environment.
 - 3.3. The Student Services delegate will support faculty to implement accommodations and/or UDL principles.
 - 3.4. The college community must implement accommodations and/or UDL principles in support of recommendations from Student Services.
 - 3.5. Learners should monitor the effectiveness of accommodation(s) and or UDL principles throughout the term and contact Student Services if requests need to be adjusted because of a change or to better meet needs.
4. Resolution of Disputes
 - 4.1. Learners may appeal accommodation decisions through the Learner Appeals Policy and associated Learner Academic Appeals Procedure.
 - 4.2. Members of the college community have a right to discuss any particular accommodation(s) with Student Services if, in their opinion, the accommodation(s) compromise(s) *bona fide* educational requirements. If there are any questions or concerns about an accommodation decision made through the Student Services process, these should be addressed to Student Services for resolution.

Definitions

Accommodation:

Is the process of making alterations to the educational environment to ensure equitable access, or to reduce, or eliminate a discriminatory effect on learners based on a protected ground. This can include changes to academic services, courses, practices, policies, physical environment, progression, and graduation requirements. They can be provided to individuals and groups or provided through universal design practices, subject to undue hardship.

Barrier

Any physical, architectural, technological, informational, attitudinal, policy or practice that hinders the full and equitable participation of persons because of a protected ground under the *Alberta Human Rights Act*, as amended.

Bona fide educational requirements

Requirements that are essential to maintain academic integrity and are necessary for learners to acquire and demonstrate essential skills and knowledge. These may include admission, progression and graduation requirements of a course, course of study, or program, including the requirements for learners to acquire and demonstrate essential skills and knowledge related to course objectives and learning outcomes and, if applicable, any professional licensing requirements.

College community

All learners, employees, Elders, independent contractors, suppliers, volunteers, visitors and members of the Board of Governors of the college while they are either on or using college property, participating in college programs and activities or involved in the business or affairs of the college, on or off college premises.

Individual accommodation plan

Document prepared by Student Services and provided to the learner that details the accommodation(s) and/or Universal Design equivalents to be provided by the college. The individual accommodation plan is to be provided to applicable members of the college community by the student when requesting accommodations.

Learner

A person who is currently registered as a learner at the college whether or not for credit. For the purposes of this document, "learner" shall be used synonymously for applicants, and learners, unless otherwise noted.

Protected grounds

Alberta human rights legislation prohibits discrimination in the provision of goods, services, accommodation, or facilities customarily available to the public based on specifically articulated protected grounds, including race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status or sexual orientation. Refer to *Alberta Human Rights Act*, RSA 2000, c A-25.5, as amended.

Licensed professional:

A licensed professional with specific training and expertise in the diagnosis and description of the condition(s) for which accommodation is being requested.

Undue hardship:

Means any grounds at common law for when the duty to accommodate can no longer be met. Examples of such grounds include, but are not limited to, compromising safety standards, failing to meet established necessary requirements and essential elements of a course or program, prohibitive costs, disruption or interference with the proper or necessary functioning of the college, *bona fide* educational requirements, or substantial interference with the rights or other individuals or groups

Universal Design

Involves designing products, spaces, activities and services so that they can be accessed by as many diverse people as possible, thereby minimizing the need for individual accommodation. Universal design focuses on the built environment. Universal design does not imply one solution for everyone; rather, it reflects an awareness of the unique nature of each individual as well as the need to accommodate differences.

Universal Design for Learning

Is a curriculum design, development, and delivery framework that works to accommodate the needs and abilities of all learners to create equitable, inclusive and accessible learning environments. The implementation of UDL leads to the development of a flexible learning environment in which information is presented in multiple ways, students engage in learning in a variety of ways, and students are provided options when demonstrating their learning.

Data sheet

Accountable Officer

Executive Team member responsible for Student Services

Responsible officer

Director, Student Services

Relevant dates

Approved	Board of Governors: BOG161127-09
Effective	May 1, 2016
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Related policy

Learner Accommodation Policy #500-1-4

Associated policies, procedures, and guidelines

Academic Continuance and Graduation Policy #500-1-5

Admissions Policy #500-1-2

Bow Valley College Learner Records Retention Guidelines #500-1-16

Grading Policy #500-1-6

Information Management Policy #300-2-9

Learner Appeals Policy #500-1-12

Privacy and Access Policy #300-2-10

Privacy, Information Security, and Identity Management Policy #300-2-11

Protected Disclosure Policy #200-1-6

Related legislation

Alberta Human Rights Act, RSA 2000, cA-25.5, as amended

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, RSA 2000, cF-25, as amended

Health Information Act, RSA 2000, C H-5, as amended