

# LEARNER ACCOMMODATION POLICY

## PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY

### Policy Statement

#### *What is the policy?*

Bow Valley College works hard to respect and include everyone. The College wants everyone to have fair and equal access to programs and services. The College also wants to maintain academic standards. This policy is about **accommodating** learner needs.

**Accommodation** means changing something about a service so that someone can access it.

This includes people with disabilities.

### Purpose

#### *What is the policy for?*

The College does not support discrimination. This policy follows the laws in Canada about discrimination. The policy states the responsibilities of the College and the learners.

### Scope and Compliance

#### *Who does the policy affect?*

This policy is for all Bow Valley College learners and employees.

All employees, learners, and contractors at Bow Valley College are responsible for knowing, understanding, and following policies and procedures.

This policy is for the whole College. This includes all campuses, courses, services, and **facilities**. It may include:

- course work, exams, **course loads**, and work placements
- college services

**Facilities** are the physical parts of the College, such as the buildings and furniture.

**Course load** is the number of courses you take at the same time.

- learner services
- physical **facilities**, such as the buildings, classrooms, or furniture

## Main Objectives

### *What are the goals of the policy?*

1. The College and the learner share the responsibility for accommodating the learner.
2. Learners are responsible for saying when they need an accommodation. An accommodation is for legally protected reasons. The College creates the process for the accommodation.
3. The College makes sure this policy is available to learners and employees. The College must review the policy regularly. The College must review the policy when there is a change to the law.
4. Accommodations may be made to individuals or to groups. Accommodations may be made using **universal design**.

**Universal design** is when you design things so as many people as possible can use them.
5. An accommodation does not require lowering academic or non-academic standards. A learner who has an accommodation is still responsible for developing essential skills.
6. The College has the right to refuse or take back an accommodation. The College has this right when the accommodation is not appropriate. The College has this right when there is **undue hardship** on the College.

**Undue hardship** is when something is too difficult to do properly.
7. The College will protect the privacy of the learner. This right is protected by law.
8. The College will try to respond quickly to requests for accommodation. However, an accommodation is not an absolute right. It must be balanced with the rights of others. The College will not make an accommodation if:
  - a. there is **undue hardship**
  - b. it makes serious disadvantages for others
  - c. it causes a safety risk

- d. it gets in the way of providing services to other learners
9. Learners may **appeal** accommodation decisions.

When you **appeal** a decision, you ask the College to look at it again.

## Definitions

**Accommodation:** An accommodation is when you change the way you deliver services so they become accessible to more people. This includes people with disabilities. The College can make accommodations to an individual person, groups of people, or through **universal design**.

Examples of accommodation include:

- missing a class, lab, or other activity
- different admissions requirements
- a different course load
- technology that helps you
- different furniture
- automatic doors
- Braille signs (symbols for people who cannot see)
- deaf interpreter
- sign language interpreter
- exam accommodations
- extra time on tests or assignments
- someone who writes down what everyone is saying for you
- someone who takes notes for you
- someone who interprets through speaking
- someone who reads for you
- someone who writes for you
- religious clothing or objects
- service animals

**Employee:** An employee is a person who works for the College.

**Learner:** A learner is someone who is registered at the College. The learner may be registered for credit or non-credit courses.

**Legally protected grounds:** Legally protected grounds are the reasons why you cannot discriminate. They come from the Alberta human rights law. This law makes it illegal to discriminate against people when you are providing goods, services, or facilities.

**Privacy:** The law says the College must keep information about accommodation private. The records can only be shared if:

1. The learner gives written permission.
2. There is an immediate danger to the learner or to others.
3. The courts or the police order the College to release the information.

**Standards:** Standards are the requirements for how the College is run. Standards include rules, policies, procedures, and how we run the **facilities**. Standards control the way the College provides services, programs, and courses.

Facility standards include lighting, flooring, and furniture.

Academic standards include exams, pass/fail requirements, admission requirements, and graduation requirements.

**Undue hardship:** Undue hardship is when something is too hard to be able to do properly. For example, an accommodation makes undue hardship if it is not safe or it doesn't meet the necessary requirements for a course.

**Universal design:** Universal design is when you design products, buildings, and services so as many people as possible can use them. When you use universal design, you reduce the need for individual accommodation.