

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES			
Effective Date	February 26, 2026	Policy Type	Academic
Responsibility	Vice-President, Academic	Related Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to Confidential Student Records and Information Policy • Admissions Policy • Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy • Records Management Policy • CARE Policy • Fit To Learn Fit to Work Policy • Alberta Human Rights Duty to accommodate students with disabilities in post-secondary educational institutions
Approval Authority	Academic Council	Review Schedule	3 years

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. Northwestern Polytechnic (“NWP” or “the Polytechnic”), is dedicated to providing an accessible learning environment that is inclusive for students with disabilities and providing appropriate academic accommodations in accordance with human rights and privacy laws to foster academic growth for all students.

2. Background:

- 2.1. NWP strives to be an inclusive Polytechnic that promotes equality and growth for all students. The Polytechnic is committed to providing access and support to students with disabilities in accordance with the Alberta Human Rights Duty to accommodate students with disabilities in post-secondary educational institutions.

3. Policy Objective:

- 3.1. This policy outlines the roles and responsibilities of the students, staff and faculty at NWP with regards to the implementation of academic accommodations for students with disabilities.
 - 3.2. This policy informs students that accommodations are implemented based on barriers to learning that are related to a disability, while maintaining the integrity of the Polytechnic's high academic standards, ensuring fairness for all students.
- 4. Scope:**
- 4.1. This policy applies to situations where students are seeking academic accommodations at NWP.
 - 4.2. This policy encompasses the responsibility of the Polytechnic, including staff and faculty, to provide an inclusive learning environment based on the disclosure of a disability by the student and request for accommodation through appropriate channels.
- 5. Definitions:**
- 5.1. "Academic Accommodation" or "Accommodation" is the process of adapting the way in which services are provided, to the point of undue hardship, to eliminate or reduce barriers that individuals with disabilities face when attempting to access those services. Accommodation does not require NWP to lower its academic standards or exempt a student with a disability of the responsibility to acquire and develop the essential skills and competencies that are expected of all students.
 - 5.2. "Accessibility Services" is the accessibility department at NWP whose staff assist prospective or current students requiring academic accommodations or disability-related assistance.
 - 5.3. "Barrier" refers to anything physical, architectural, technological or attitudinal; anything related to information or communications; or anything resulting from a policy or practice that hinders the full and equal participation in society of an individual with a disability.
 - 5.4. "Disability" is defined by the Alberta Human Rights Act as any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation, or disfigurement (permanent or temporary) that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness, or any mental disorder, developmental disorder, or learning disorder, regardless of the cause or duration of the disorder.
 - 5.5. "Documentation" is the requisite medical and/or psychological documents verifying a student's disability, the impact of the disability, and any resultant restrictions it places on the student in an academic environment. These documents must be current, relevant, thorough, and based on an appropriate assessment from a registered practitioner qualified to diagnose and speak to such matters.

- 5.6. "Documented Disability" is a disability that has been confirmed with relevant documentation submitted and reviewed by the Accessibility Services Office.
- 5.7. "Duty to accommodate" is the obligation of the Polytechnic to make reasonable adjustments, to the point of undue hardship or as required by law, to the delivery of services (including teaching and the method of evaluation) to reduce or eliminate the impact of discriminatory rules, policies, practices, standards, or decisions, which have an adverse impact on an individual or group of individuals based on a characteristic or perceived characteristic referenced in the protected grounds.
- 5.8. "Essential Requirements" include both bona fide occupational requirements and bona fide educational requirements. Essential requirements include, but are not limited to, the knowledge and skills that must be acquired and demonstrated for a student to successfully meet the learning outcomes of the course, program, workplace experience, and if applicable, professional licensing requirements.
- 5.9. "Functional Limitations" are ways in which a disability will affect an individual's access to activities, such as learning. Functional impacts are used to identify reasonable accommodation(s) for students with a disability.
- 5.10. "Interim Accommodation" is a bridge accommodation provided when there is a significant rationale indicating the need to address a functional impact caused by a disability, yet the student is in the process of obtaining the appropriate documentation. Interim accommodation may not cover all accommodations that may be required by a student and may be issued only for one semester or training period for the duration of education as a registered student at Northwestern Polytechnic.
- 5.11. "Letter of Accommodation" is a document created by Accessibility Services to indicate approved academic accommodations based on the documentation provided.
- 5.12. "Reasonable Accommodation" refers to the provision of the accommodation to a standard that overcomes a discriminatory effect to the point of undue hardship and does not require the Polytechnic to choose the most expensive or comprehensive level of accommodation.
- 5.13. "Undue Hardship" is a situation where accommodating a student with disabilities would lead to unreasonable and excessive challenges for the Polytechnic. This includes, but is not limited to, situations where:
 - a) The accommodation significantly interferes with the rights of other students,
 - b) The accommodation creates health and/or safety concerns,
 - c) The financial cost of the accommodation is excessive, in the context of

Northwestern Polytechnic as a whole, and/or

d) The accommodation would result in a necessary course or program requirement not being met.

6. Guiding Principles

- 6.1. This policy is guided by federal and provincial human rights legislation and by the following principles:
 - 6.1.1. NWP is committed to the principles of equality and inclusion. NWP acknowledges and accepts its duty to accommodate students with disabilities up to the point of undue hardship.
 - 6.1.2. Members of the NWP community are required to act in compliance with federal and provincial legislation regarding the accommodation of persons with disabilities and the regulations and rules set out in this policy.
 - 6.1.3. Students with disabilities have an equal right to access all programs and services and are subject to NWP policies, regulations and procedures for admission to and completion of NWP programs.
 - 6.1.4. Students with disabilities are responsible for identifying all needs for academic accommodation to the Accessibility Services office in accordance with this policy. A student's responsibility to identify a need for accommodation is an ongoing responsibility that may begin at the admission stage and continue throughout the student's enrollment at NWP. Accommodations cannot be applied retroactively.
 - 6.1.5. The process of accommodation is a shared responsibility and requires the student, Accessibility Services, Faculty and, when applicable, other areas of the Polytechnic, to play an active role.
 - 6.1.6. Academic accommodations utilized by the Polytechnic will correspond with those outlined in the Alberta Guidelines for Accommodating Students with Disabilities in Post-Secondary Studies.

7. Roles and Responsibilities:

- 7.1. Accessibility Services Responsibilities:
 - 7.1.1. Respond to student requests for accommodation and advise students on documentation requirements, appropriate accommodation and processes.
 - 7.1.2. Review disability documentation provided by students requesting accommodation to ensure currency and validity for the accommodations requested.
 - 7.1.3. Develop, implement and review student accommodation plans that are reasonable and justifiable based on supporting medical documentation.

- 7.1.4. Inform students of specific processes and timelines for accessing each accepted Accommodation Request.
 - 7.1.5. Maintain confidentiality of disability and medical information; share only on a need-to-know basis within Accessibility Services or with explicit written consent, unless there is imminent risk.
 - 7.1.6. Assist instructors in implementing accommodations and collaborate when recommended accommodations may affect academic integrity or essential requirements.
 - 7.1.7. Advise students regarding Student Aid grants for students with disabilities.
 - 7.1.8. Collaborate and share information/resources with Polytechnic units (Faculty, Facilities, IT, Residence, etc.) to enhance campus accessibility.
 - 7.1.9. Maintain currency with relevant legislation and evidence-based developments in the provision of accommodations.
 - 7.1.10. Publish procedures for specific accommodations in accordance with this policy.
- 7.2. Faculty Responsibilities:
- 7.2.1. Assist with the implementation of academic accommodations as requested by the student, as outlined in the Letter of Accommodation.
 - 7.2.2. Comply with Accessibility procedures for the implementation of approved academic accommodations, including fulfilling requirements related to the administration of accommodated assessments.
 - 7.2.3. Contact the student's assigned Accessibility Advisor with any questions or concerns regarding the content of the Letter of Accommodation, before communicating to the student that a recommended accommodation cannot be provided.
 - 7.2.4. Work with Accessibility Services to find solutions when recommended accommodations may compromise essential course requirements.
 - 7.2.5. Recognize that a student's right to equitable access supersedes intellectual/privacy concerns, provided the student follows Accessibility Services procedures and no undue hardship is created.
 - 7.2.6. Where Faculty have reason to suspect that a student may have a need for accommodation related to a disability, information on Polytechnic services, such as Accessibility Services, should be provided to the student.
- 7.3. Student Responsibilities
- 7.3.1. Identify the need for accommodation early and provide adequate time for

Accessibility Services to coordinate support and services.

- 7.3.2. Adhere to all established procedures and deadlines related to the approved accommodations.
- 7.3.3. Actively participate in the accommodation process and communicate with Accessibility Services when adjustments to their Letter of Accommodation may need to be considered.
- 7.3.4. Recognize that accommodation may not be immediate or perfect, and alternatives may be offered that still meet functional needs.
- 7.3.5. Understand that accommodations are not retroactive and require disclosure and documentation before coordination begins.
- 7.3.6. Apply for Student Aid disability funding when required, and remit funds if requested to support contracted services.
- 7.3.7. Take responsibility for arranging accommodations with external bodies (e.g., AIT, licensing/board exams) where relevant.

7.4. Other Responsibilities:

Stakeholder	Responsibilities
Academic Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommend and formally support this policy
Vice-President, Academic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop, maintain and formally support this policy • Review and approve exception requests relative to the requirements of this policy • Take proactive steps to reinforce compliance with this policy by all stakeholders
Polytechnic Management, Supervisors, or Representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the implementation and/or monitoring of the policy requirements • Follow the guidelines provided in this policy when performing due diligence and assessment of risks
All Users (Employees and contractors, students, visitors, volunteers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comply with the requirements of this policy • Report all non-compliance instances with this policy (observed or suspected) to their Supervisor, Instructor or Polytechnic Representative as soon as possible

8. Exceptions to the Policy:

- 8.1. Exceptions to the guiding principles in this policy must be documented and formally approved by the Vice-President Academic.
- 8.2. Policy exceptions must describe:
 - 8.2.1. The nature of the exception
 - 8.2.2. A reasonable explanation for why the policy exception is required
 - 8.2.3. Any risk created by the exception to this policy
 - 8.2.4. Evidence of approval by the Vice-President Academic
9. Inquiries:
 - 9.1. Inquiries regarding this policy can be directed to the Dean, School of Students.
10. Appeals:
 - 10.1. Students wishing to appeal matters on this policy must follow the regulations set out in the Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy.
11. Revision history:
 - Created: December 6, 2000
 - Revised: February 2004
 - Revised: April 11, 2006
 - Revised: January 8, 2009
 - Revised and Recommended by Academic Council: May 5, 2022
 - Approved by Board of Governors: May 19, 2022
 - Approved by the Academic Council: February 26, 2026