

# ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY

## Policy Statement

The Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC) provides students with the right to reasonable academic accommodation. Hanson College of Business, Health and Technology (hereinafter 'Hanson'), has a legal obligation to eliminate barriers to equal access for students with disabilities. Accordingly, the purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the provision of reasonable academic accommodations to Hanson students. This policy is available to past, current, and future international students at all times.

## Definitions

**Accommodations:** An instructional or environmental change that allows a student to successfully understand and respond to the curriculum. Examples of accommodation include preferential seating in the classroom, extended time on tests, and assistive technology. The student is expected to learn the same material and complete the same assignments as other students, but the accommodations allow alternate ways to learn and respond. An accommodation seeks to provide 'fairness' in the classroom. Accommodations under this policy include but are not limited to:

- Retroactive accommodations, which are accommodations applied in the present time that affect academic activities that have already taken place; and
- Temporary and Permanent disability accommodations.

**Disability:** A term that covers a broad range and degree of conditions and may be permanent or temporary. Disability is defined in the OHRC as follows:

- any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation, or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect, or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- a mental disorder, or
- an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

**Functional limitations:** A disability-related impediment that affects a student's ability to function in the learning

environment. Functional limitations often disadvantage a student academically and may require accommodations for the student to have equitable access to the curriculum.

**Regulated Health Care Professional:** In Ontario, regulated health professions are governed under the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 (RHPA) and Health Professions Acts. This includes but is not limited to licensed physicians, licensed midwives, registered nurse practitioners, licensed dentists, registered psychologists, physio, etc.

**Undue Hardship:** Under the OHRC, every student with a disability is entitled to reasonable accommodation short of undue hardship to the College. Undue hardship is a standard that acts as a limit to the duty of accommodation; once this limit is reached, there is no longer a requirement to accommodate. The OHRC sets out three elements for consideration in assessing whether accommodation would cause undue hardship: cost, outside sources of funding if any, and health and safety requirements, if any.

## Academic Accommodation Guidelines

An appropriate accommodation level enables a student to meet the essential requirements of the program, with no alteration in standards or outcomes, although the manner in which the student demonstrates mastery, knowledge, and skills may be altered.

Because decisions regarding accommodation may affect the student's progress in their program of study, the College processes these promptly. In doing so, the College considers academic program structure (e.g., pre-requisites), and official timelines (e.g., semester registration dates, drop/add and withdrawal dates).

Students are required to cooperate in the accommodation process. This means that students are required to request and accept offers of reasonable accommodations related to their disability-related needs (not preferences) that will assist them in meeting their required learning outcomes.

### **Accommodations are Based on a Student's Functional Limitations, not their Diagnosis:**

- Accommodations address a student's identified functional limitations linked to an underlying disability. The type of information that the student seeking accommodation is expected to provide includes:
- Confirmation that the student has a medical condition that requires accommodation (however, there is no obligation for the student to disclose their diagnosis).
- The limitations or needs associated with disability.
- The type of accommodation(s) needed to allow the student to fulfill the essential duties of participating in an academic course or program.

**Accommodations Provided Without Supporting Documentation from a Regulated Health Care Professional:**

Students with developing mental health conditions, or who are waiting for medical documentation from their registered healthcare professionals, will still receive reasonable accommodations. Such students may seek academic accommodations without documentation of a diagnosed condition but must provide information from a physician that a diagnosis is under investigation.

Pending the regulated healthcare professional's assessment to identify the individual needs, and limitations of a student, Hanson will use the best information available to make the accommodation decision or provide interim accommodations. The decision shall take into consideration how the student identifies their own needs, pending the assessment.

**Temporary Accommodations**

The OHRC protects students with temporary disabilities. For example, some physical or mental health conditions and the associated functional limitations are temporary. Within this context, academic accommodations apply. The College meaningfully considers all OHRC-related requests for accommodation in relation to the individual's unique circumstances. These accommodations are not limitless.

**Retroactive Accommodations**

The College accepts retroactive accommodation requests as made in good faith unless there are legitimate reasons for acting otherwise. It examines each case on the unique circumstances and the student's individual needs.

Documentation from a Regulated Health Care Professional about functional limitations that affected academic performance is required to support the request. The College provides accommodation only after it has made a final decision based on the submission of the required medical documentation.

When a student submits a request for retroactive accommodations in relation to one set of circumstances, the College does not support concurrent or sequential requests under the Student Grading Policy or Academic Integrity Policy for these same circumstances.

At the College's discretion, a grade received for any examination, test, or assignment completed under the conditions of a retroactive or temporary accommodation may, upon receipt of medical documentation or a final decision regarding an appeal, be reverted to the grade originally achieved. Communication of Accommodation Needs to Faculty Students are not required to share disability-related information with their professors to receive academic accommodations, and it is not appropriate for faculty or staff outside the Academic department to request such information. Providing accommodation-related information about a student's functional limitation(s) is the responsibility of the Academic Manager.

## Disability Education

Hanson is committed to supporting faculty members with assisting students requiring academic accommodations through the provision of disability education in two key areas:

General disability awareness

Education and training, support, and information on interacting with a student who appears to have a disability-related issue that is interfering with their studies.

## Accommodation Process

Hanson ensures a consistent process to guide accommodation decisions as follows:

Students initiate the accommodation process by contacting the Academic Department.

- Students attend an appointment with the Academic Manager/Advisor and bring in requested documentation.
- The College will consider the need for accommodations to assist the student in cooperating in the accommodations process.
- Students participate in the process to determine reasonable accommodations.
- Students decide if they or the Academic Advisor share disability related information with their instructors to receive academic accommodation.
- Students seeking a change in accommodation will do so through requesting an appointment with their Academic Advisor.

## References

Ontario Human Rights Commission (2018). The opportunity to succeed: Achieving barrier-free education for [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#) [Ministry of Health Ministry of Long-Term Care](#)  
[OHRC Education and Disability: Human Rights Issues in Ontario's Education System, 2002](#) [OHRC Guidelines on Accessible Education, 2009](#)  
[OHRC Policy and Guidelines on Disability and the Duty to Accommodate, Revised December 2009](#) [OHRC Policy on accessible education for students with disabilities, 2018](#)  
[OHRC Policy on Preventing Discrimination Based on Mental Health Disabilities and Addictions, 2014](#) [OHRC The opportunity to succeed: Achieving barrier-free education for students with disabilities](#) [Ontario Human Rights Code, 2023](#)  
[Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004](#)  
[Post-Secondary Students with Mental Health Disabilities – A Guide to Academic Accommodations and Managing your Mental Health while on Campus](#)  
[The Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, 2015](#)