

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY			
<b>Effective Date</b>	May 19, 2022	<b>Policy Type</b>	Academic
<b>Responsibility</b>	Associate Vice-President, Students	<b>Cross-Reference</b>	Access to Confidential Student Records and Information Policy Admissions Policy Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy Records Management Policy
<b>Approver</b>	Board of Governors	<b>Appendices</b>	n/a
<b>Review Schedule</b>	3 Years		

**1. Policy Statement**

- 1.1. The institution, Northwestern Polytechnic (“NWP” or the “institution”), 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 in order to foster academic growth for all students.

**2. Background**

- 2.1. The institution NWP strives to be an inclusive institution that promotes equality and growth for all students. The institution is committed to providing access and supports 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 institution’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 institution, including staff and faculty, to provide an inclusive learning environment based on the declaration of a disability by the student.

5. Definitions

- 5.1. **"Academic Accommodation"** or **"Accommodation"** is the process of making alterations to the delivery of services, up to the point of undue hardship, so that those services are accessible to students with disabilities. Accommodations are intended to remove or reduce barriers for students with disabilities or functional limitations. Accommodation does not require NWP to lower its academic standards, and a student with a disability has the responsibility to acquire and develop the essential skills and competencies expected of all students.
- 5.2. **"Accessibility Services"** refers to the accessibility department at The institution NWP whose staff assist prospective or current students requiring academic accommodations or disability-related assistance.
- 5.3. **"Disability"** refers to physical or mental conditions including, but not limited to, hearing loss, vision loss, mobility disabilities, psychological/psychiatric disabilities, learning disabilities, acute mental distress, neurological disorders, health problems and illnesses. Disabilities may be temporary or permanent, as per the *Duty to Accommodate Students with Disabilities in Post-Secondary Educational Institutions (2010)*.
- 5.4. **"Documentation"** or **"Documented Disability"** refers to a report signed and dated by a qualified medical professional or registered psychologist qualified to diagnose. It should be current (within five years) and include a clear description of how the disability and treatment, if applicable, impacts the individual's functioning in an academic setting. If this information is provided, a diagnosis is not required to access academic accommodations at NWP. Students attempting to access provincial grant funding will be required to submit documentation with a diagnosis as per Student Aid guidelines.
- 5.5. **"Duty to Accommodate"** refers to the legal duty to accommodate a person's needs based on a protected ground (as defined by the *Alberta Human Rights Act*) to eliminate discriminatory effects upon students with disabilities.
- 5.6. **"Essential Requirements"** are reasonable and justifiable components of the program that may limit entry to or completion of a program or course. They include the admission, progression and graduation requirements that are essential to maintaining the academic integrity of a program, including those necessary for students to acquire and demonstrate essential skills and knowledge.
- 5.7. **"Interim Accommodation"** may be enacted on behalf of a student requesting academic accommodations for one semester or training period only and is implemented based on evident barriers the student is facing after consultation with an Accessibility Advisor and pending receipt of supporting documentation to extend accommodations.
- 5.8. **"Letter of Accommodation"** is a document created by Accessibility Services to indicate approved academic accommodations based on the documentation provided. It is made available to students and instructors at the onset of academic accommodations and may be updated as determined by the Accessibility Advisor. This letter is for informative purposes only as students may choose not to use accommodations for all learning environments. The

student is responsible for requesting the implementation of any approved academic accommodation.

- 5.9. **“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 institution to choose the most expensive or comprehensive level of accommodation.
- 5.10. **“Shared Responsibility”** refers to the expectation that the accommodation process is a shared responsibility between the student and the institution.
- 5.11. **“Undue Hardship”** under both provincial and federal legislation is deemed to have a very high standard and would include, but is not limited to, the following: a situation in which students cannot meet the requirements for entering or completing a program; significant interference with the rights of other students; and health and safety concerns. The institutional responsibility requires due diligence and may require adjudication under legislation.

## **6. Guiding Principles**

This policy is guided by federal and provincial human rights legislation and by the following principles:

- 6.1. 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.
- 6.2. 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.
- 6.3. 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.
- 6.4. 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.
- 6.5. Academic accommodations utilized by the institution 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 accommodations.
- 7.1.2. Review supporting disability documentation provided by students requesting accommodation.

- 7.1.3. Develop, implement and review student accommodation plans.
- 7.1.4. Implement accommodations that are reasonable and justifiable.
- 7.1.5. Maintain student confidentiality and support their right to dignity and privacy in an environment free of discrimination.
- 7.1.6. Collaborate with instructors and other stakeholders to implement accommodations.
- 7.1.7. Assist registered students with applying for scholarships and disability grants.
- 7.1.8. Work with instructors on implementing practices to eliminate barriers in the learning environment.
- 7.1.9. Provide information regarding requesting and accessing accommodations through multiple means and formats.
- 7.1.9.1. 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 and refer to the Letter of Accommodation for confirmation of approved accommodations.
- 7.2.2. Follow established procedures for implementation of academic accommodations as required, e.g., submitting exams to be written with Accessibility Services within the required timeline determined by Accessibility Services.
- 7.2.3. Work with Accessibility Services to develop solutions in cases where the recommended academic accommodations could compromise the ability of the student to attain the essential competencies required for successful completion of the course.
- 7.2.4. Maintain student confidentiality and support their right to dignity and privacy in an environment free of discrimination.
- 7.2.5. Understand that a student's right to accommodation to ensure equitable access to post-secondary education supersedes concerns regarding intellectual and privacy rights so long as the student follows procedures directed by Accessibility Services to the point of undue hardship for the institution.

**7.3. Students with Disabilities Responsibilities:**

- 7.3.1. In addition to the responsibilities of all students as indicated in the *Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy*, students with disabilities who seek accommodation are also responsible for the following:
  - 7.3.1.1. Provide all required documentation in support of the request for accommodation.

- 7.3.1.2. Provide adequate time for accessibility advisors to review requests and coordinate needed supports and services. Some accommodations take longer to arrange than others (e.g., contracted support services such as educational attendants and sign language interpreters and transcriptions). Failure to make a request and supply the required documentation in a timely manner may delay the approval and/or implementation of the requested accommodation.
- 7.3.1.3. Abide by all recommendations and procedures for accommodation developed or coordinated by Accessibility Services.
- 7.3.1.4. Meet the essential requirements of their course/program.
- 7.3.1.5. Understand the coordination, provision, implementation and/or delivery of academic accommodations may not begin until a disability is disclosed and/or the documentation regarding the disability has been received and reviewed by **Accessibility Services** and is subject to the limits of undue hardship.
- 7.3.1.6. Where the student has an approved loan or bursary, the Accessibility Services office may assist in applying for disability funding. The student is responsible for providing specified disability funds to NWP in the exceptional circumstance that the institution is coordinating and managing those specific services on behalf of the student. Failure to provide specified disability funds may result in the student being invoiced for applicable charges.

**7.4. Other Responsibilities:**

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

**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 Academics and Research.
- 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 Academics and Research

**9. Inquiries**

- 9.1. Inquiries regarding this policy can be directed to the Dean, Students.

**10. Appeals**

- 10.1. Students wishing to appeal matters pertaining to this policy must follow the regulations set out in the Student Academic Grievance Policy.

**11. Amendments (Revision History Dates)**

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