



Policy	#3-17
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Administrator Responsible:	Executive Vice President Academic & COO

INSTRUCTIONAL ACCOMMODATION AND ACCESSIBLE LEARNING SERVICES

POLICY STATEMENT

North Island College (NIC) celebrates diversity within its community and will promote an open, respectful, barrier-free and supportive learning environment for students with disabilities. Instructional accommodations and accessible learning services shall be provided in a manner supportive of and consistent with our educational mandate, academic principles and legal obligations. There is a shared responsibility between NIC and the student requesting the instructional accommodation. The intent is to provide students with an equal opportunity to succeed through the administration of reasonable accommodations.

PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of this policy is to describe the principles, definitions and responsibilities pertaining to the administration of instructional accommodations and accessible learning services.

This policy pertains only to accommodations related to a student's educational pursuits at NIC.

PRINCIPLES

1. In accordance with NIC's policies and procedures including the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *BC Human Rights Code* and other relevant legislation, NIC and its Department of Accessible Learning Services shall provide reasonable accommodations, to the point of undue hardship.
2. Accommodations must be requested by the student and supported by appropriate documentation. Decisions regarding instructional accommodations are determined on an individual basis by the Department of Accessible Learning Services faculty.
3. A review and resolution process (see Appendix A) is available to students who dispute that reasonable accommodations are being provided.

4. Students with disabilities are required to meet the learning outcomes of the courses and programs in which they are registered to receive credit.

Definitions:

Accommodation

Accommodation mitigates the impact of the learning environment on persons with disabilities. The purpose of providing accommodation is to facilitate students with disabilities in meeting the learning outcomes. Accommodations are based on individualized need and may include but are not limited to physical, instructional, technological or evaluative adaptations.

Accessible

Accessible addresses the degree to which NIC's services and physical environments are useable with or without accommodations.

College Community

Employees and students of NIC including contractors and others who have committed to an agreement with the college to provide services or become learners.

Disability:

A student with a disability has both:

- a) a physical, cognitive, mental health or learning impairment, and
- b) a documented restriction or limitation to the student's ability to perform the activities necessary to participate in studies at a post-secondary level. The impairment may be permanent, intermittent or temporary.

Documentation

Documentation refers to the written description of the disability and information about its impact. The Documentation must be from a relevant, qualified health or educational professional and accepted by NIC. Depending on the nature of the disability and the accommodations requested, further Documentation may be required.

Learning Outcomes and/or Program Requirements

Outcomes and requirements include, but are not limited to the acquisition and demonstration of essential knowledge and skills that are normally required to pass and complete a course and/or program, licensing process or field practicum. Learning outcomes are listed in the Authorized Course Description.

Good Standing

All students are deemed to be in good standing unless their student account is in financial arrears and/or there is a current discipline related violation filed with the office of the registrar. Good standing is not recorded on the academic transcript.

Reasonable

Reasonable accommodation refers to the ability of NIC to alter the teaching and learning environment to the point of undue hardship.

In all cases reasonable accommodations:

- a) are based on documented individual disability needs,
- b) do not compromise learning outcomes of a course/program, and
- c) do not pose a safety risk to the College community.

Student

A person the registrar recognizes to be enrolled and in good standing in a course or program of studies at NIC and includes a person applying to be enrolled in a course or program of studies at an institution (BC College and Institute Act).

Undue Hardship

Undue hardship is the test of reasonable accommodation. What constitutes undue hardship will vary according to the unique circumstances of each situation. The following would likely constitute undue hardship:

- a) when accommodation alternatives would result in a learning outcome of a course or program requirement being unmet; or
- b) when the accommodation would result in a risk to public safety or a substantial risk of personal injury to a student; or
- c) when financial cost is such that the operations of the college would be fundamentally diminished, or a program or service would cease to exist due to the financial burden of the accommodation.

Resources:

University of Victoria –Policy No: AC1205 Academic Accommodation and Access for Students with Disabilities

Thompson Rivers University - Policy BRD 10-0 Academic Accommodation and Services for Students with Disabilities

Legislative References:

BC College and Institute Act

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

BC Human Rights Code

Cross References:

NIC Policy #2-08 Human Rights

NIC Policy #3-31 Student Complaint Resolution

NIC Policy #3-30 Student Appeals

Appendix A Procedures

Academic accommodations and accessible learning services and supports are available to students with disabilities at North Island College (NIC) as described in NIC Policy #3-17 Instructional Accommodation and Accessible Learning Services. The following procedures outline the process for determining and achieving and administering these accommodations.

1. Admission

- i. The College encourages applications from individuals with disabilities. Applicants requiring assistance at the admissions stage are encouraged to contact the Department of Accessible Learning Services as soon as possible.

2. Documentation of Specific Disabilities

- i. Students who would like to access disability support services, referrals for external funding and/or accommodations are required to provide documentation to the Department of Accessible Learning Services.
- ii. Students who wish to access services or funding from an external agency, should contact the Department of Accessible Learning Services to clarify eligibility requirements. The Department of Accessible Learning Services is available for consultation with students regarding individual documentation questions.
- iii. Documentation must be from a relevant, qualified health or educational professional and accepted by NIC. Depending on the nature of the disability and the accommodations requested, further documentation may be required.

Appropriate documentation should include:

- Date of report
- Diagnostic statement identifying the disability
- Disability related restrictions and impact of limitations in an educational setting
- Signature and credentials of diagnosing professional

- iv. North Island College does not cover the cost of documentation.

v. Determining Accommodations

- a. The Department of Accessible Learning Services will review the documentation provided by the student.
- b. In consultation with the student, the Department of Accessible Learning Services will determine the accommodations that would be appropriate in the particular course/program based on the functional impact of the disability in that setting. The essential learning outcomes for the course and program requirements will always be taken into account when determining the accommodations.

- c. The student and the Department of Accessible Learning Services will develop a confidential accommodation letter based on the documentation.
- d. The Department of Accessible Learning Services will forward the accommodation letter to current instructional faculty.

3. Review of Reasonable Accommodations (Resolution Process)

Every effort is made to reach agreement regarding accommodations. In the event that there is a discrepancy with the accommodation plan and its implementation a review may be requested.

- i. This request can be initiated by the student or an instructor by approaching the Department of Accessible Learning Services office to discuss the request.
- ii. If further discussion does not resolve the concern, a *Request for Review of Accommodations Form* needs to be completed by the concerned party and forwarded to the Assistant Vice President of Access and Regions. The concerned party can seek assistance from the College counsellor or the Department of Accessible Learning Services office.
- iii. The review request must include:
 - The person's concerns regarding the accommodation.
 - Rationale to support the alteration or addition of an accommodation.
 - Course learning outcomes or program requirements.
 - Issues or difficulties surrounding the implementation of the accommodation if relevant.
- iv. After consultation, the Assistant Vice President of Access and Regions will make a recommendation to the relevant parties. The outcome will be shared with the parties involved.
- v. The Assistant Vice President of Access and Regions will liaise with the appropriate dean (or designate) when concerns arise in decanals areas other than that of the Assistant Vice President of Access and Regions.

It may be necessary to consider the following when resolving conflicts regarding appropriate accommodations:

- Undue hardship
- A fundamental alteration of an essential program or course outcome
- Academic integrity
- A threat to safety

If the student has further complaints about the decision or processes that are not addressed within the jurisdiction of this policy, the student may process their complaint through NIC Policy #3-31 Student Complaint Resolution.

4. Accommodated Exams and Assessments

Students may apply for accommodations for placement assessments, informal class tests or formal examinations such as mid-terms, finals, in-class writing assignments or lab exams.

- i. Accommodation for Placement Assessments will be determined and implemented through the Department of Accessible Learning Services office.
- ii. Examination accommodations are based on individual requirements as per the documentation of disability.
 - When approved for exam accommodation, students complete a Request for Exam Accommodation form from the Department of Accessible Learning Services office and submit it for processing. All students requiring exam accommodations are required to advise the Department of Accessible Learning Services office as early as possible but not less than 7 days prior to the testing date.
 - The Department of Accessible Learning Services will liaise with the instructor to request the exam or test or to communicate regarding the accommodations and alternate arrangements.
 - The Department of Accessible Learning Services office will schedule and supervise the testing and return completed exams to the instructor.

5. Adaptive Technology and Equipment

- i. Adaptive technology may be included in a student's technology plan. In such cases, students are encouraged to contact the Department of Accessible Learning Services office at least four months before classes begin to determine technology needs.
 - The Department of Accessible Learning Services will advise students on procedures and eligibility requirements if they require equipment for school and home use.
 - Most adaptive hardware/software is obtained through the Ministry of Advanced Education and/or other funders.
- ii. Adaptive Technology Available On Campus

Students should contact the Department of Accessible Learning Services office for other information about Adaptive Technology on campus.

 - Each NIC Department of Accessible Learning Services office/testing room has computers available for use by students with disabilities.
 - Selected adaptive software is available on these computers.

Accommodation Review Form

Date: _____

Initiated By: _____

Student Name: _____ Student ID: _____

Course/s: _____

Current Accommodations:

What is the request?

Relevant Accommodation History:

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Submit to: _____

Resolution:

Approved by: _____