



## **ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION AND SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

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<b>PRIMARY CONTACT</b>	<b>VICE-PROVOST, STUDENTS</b>

### **POLICY**

Thompson Rivers University (TRU) acknowledges its obligation to provide academic accommodations to ensure an accessible and inclusive educational environment to the point of undue hardship for all students with disabilities. TRU is committed to providing services and reasonable academic accommodations for students with diagnosed disabilities in a manner that is consistent with its educational mandate, academic principles and legal obligations.

TRU's objective is to provide students with disabilities the same rights, responsibilities, opportunities and respect as all other learners, enabling them to integrate into the university environment and achieve their potential for success as self-directed, independent learners. This objective will be accomplished by providing direct support services and by reducing the physical, attitudinal and systemic barriers faced by students with disabilities. Through its Department of Disability Services, TRU will assist students with disabilities who self-identify and seek academic accommodations and/or services. While the University as a whole will strive to provide appropriate and reasonable accommodations, students with disabilities are nevertheless responsible for meeting their course and program requirements.

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### **REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES**

#### **1. Legal Framework & Responsibility**

The University will provide academic accommodation to students with disabilities in accordance with the Human Rights Code (BC). The provision of academic accommodation shall not lower the academic standards of TRU nor shall it remove the need for evaluation or the student's

responsibility to meet the essential learning requirements of their courses and programs, including requisite licensing processes or field practicum. Admission to the University does not of itself guarantee that all requested accommodations for a disability will be made.

The University is responsible for creating and ensuring (to the point of undue hardship) that a barrier-free and supportive environment, which ensures equality of opportunity, exists for all students with disabilities. While services for students with disabilities will be coordinated through the Disability Services Department, the provision of said services is nevertheless a shared responsibility among faculty, tutors, staff, administration and students.

## **2. Scope**

The policy applies to:

- a. Students with a diagnosed disability who self identify and who, as a result of their disability, require academic accommodations and/or services in order to assist them with pursuing their educational goals and accessing University services;
- b. Courses and programs on all campuses of TRU and all TRU Distance Education courses and programming.

## **3. Definitions**

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions apply:

### **a. Disability**

Students with disabilities are persons who:

- i. Have a significant and long-term or recurring mobility, sensory, learning, or other physical or mental health impairment; and
- ii. Experience functional restrictions or limitations of their abilities to perform the range of life's activities including the daily activities necessary to participate in studies at a post-secondary level.

### **b. Academic Accommodation**

An academic accommodation involves the removal of barriers for students with disabilities in such a way that respects their dignity and provides them with equal access to course information and educational opportunities. An academic accommodation may involve an adaptation or alteration to the physical and instructional environment. These may include, but are not limited to, the provision of alternate formats and methods of communication, the use of adaptive technology and adaptations to the examination environment.

**c. Documentation**

For the purpose of this policy “documentation” refers to a written document which provides a diagnosis of a student’s disability along with detailed information about its functional impact. This documentation must be current (within 5 years) and must come from a certified health care professional who has expertise in the diagnosis of the condition(s) for which the accommodation(s) and/or service(s) are being requested.

**d. Essential Requirements**

The essential requirements of a course/program include, but are not limited to, the acquisition and demonstration of the knowledge and skills that are normally required to pass and complete a course/program, licensing process or field practicum.

**4. Roles and Responsibilities****a. The University**

It is the role and responsibility of the University to:

- i. Ensure that persons with disabilities are given equal consideration, with respect to the University’s admission criteria, for admission to all programs offered by the University for which they are academically qualified;
- ii. Provide reasonable accommodations to the point of undue hardship to students with disabilities in accordance with the Human Rights Code (BC);
- iii. Adapt or alter those course/program components which are discriminatory on the basis of disability, except with respect to the essential requirements of the course/program;
- iv. Refer students with disabilities to the Disability Services Department so they can review documentation to ensure it provides the required information to support decisions regarding accommodations;
- v. Ensure that faculty, administrators, tutors and staff are aware of and knowledgeable about relevant University policies and procedures and have a familiarity with access and disability related issues;
- vi. Ensure that the personal and private information about a student with a disability is handled in a confidential manner and in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (BC).

**b. Students with Disabilities**

It is the role and responsibility of every student with a disability who is seeking academic accommodation or service due to his/her disability to:

- i. Meet the academic requirements for admission to, and continuance in, their course and program of choice;
- ii. Self identify as a student with a disability and approach the Disability Services Department for assistance in a timely manner in order to allow for the arrangement of accommodations;
- iii. Provide the Disability Services Department with current documentation (within 5 years) from a certified health care professional;
- iv. Contact the Disability Services Department and meet with a Disability Advisor at the start of each semester;
- v. Follow the necessary processes and procedures, and meet the established deadlines for accessing and arranging accommodations and services, as prescribed by the Disability Services Department.

**5. Accessing Accommodation****a. Documentation**

- i. The University requires students with disabilities to identify themselves to the Disability Services Department and provide a Disability Advisor with current (no older than 5 years) documentation from a certified health care professional who has expertise and experience in the diagnosis of the condition(s) for which the academic accommodation(s) and/or service(s) are being requested. Examples of such professionals include: General Physicians, registered clinical Psychologists, Psychiatrists, Ophthalmologists, certified Audiologists, and Neurologists. The documentation must provide detailed information about the functional impact of the disability.
- ii. Any costs incurred in acquiring the documentation are the responsibility of the student.
- iii. All information is treated as confidential. No information about a student's disability or accommodations will be noted on a student's transcript.

**b. Limitations to Accommodations**

Although the University has an obligation to make the necessary efforts to reasonably accommodate a student with a disability to the point of undue hardship, when the disability precludes a student from fulfilling the essential requirements of a course/program it may be determined that due to the nature and degree of the disability, no reasonable accommodation would enable a student to fulfill the essential requirements of a course/program.

In cases such as this, the University is not required to accommodate. It will, however, be the University's responsibility to prove the essential requirements of a course/program and show that no reasonable accommodation would allow the student to meet those requirements.

#### **6. Accommodation Dispute Resolution Procedure**

The procedure for dealing with a dispute regarding an accommodation request is detailed by the Disability Services Department in accordance with the University Appeals Policy ED 4-0 and can be found on the Disability Services website at: <http://www.tru.ca/staffairs/disabilities.html>.