

Family Status Academic Accommodation Guidelines

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Purpose of this Guide

This guide is for all Carleton University students and instructors. The guide is designed to provide clear information on the accommodation process including how to request accommodation based on the protected grounds in the human rights code. The guide also explains how professors and instructors can assist with the process. For simplicity, professors, instructors, and other teaching professionals will be referred to as “instructors” hereinafter.

What is Accommodation on Human Rights Grounds?

Accommodation on human rights grounds is related to protected attributes such as disability, family status, sex and creed. The purpose of accommodation is to enable students to meet the essential requirements of their course or program and ensure equitable access to education by making appropriate adjustments to course and program related deliverable. At no time should an academic accommodation undermine or compromise the learning objectives that are established by the academic authorities of the University. Under the Code, accommodation is assessed and provided on an individual basis, to the point of undue hardship.

Beyond meeting policy and human rights legislation requirements, Carleton university is committed to being an inclusive and equitable institution, hence, supporting accommodation

requests with respect, compassion and in a timely manner, contributes to creating healthy and flourishing environments. It also prevents discrimination and human rights violations. Below is step-by-step information on the kind of accommodation that students can request and how they can make such requests along with information on how instructors can engage in and support the process.

What is Family Status Accommodation?

Accommodations under Carleton University's Human Rights Policy is provided when an individual (e.g., employee or student) identifies limitations and/or restrictions based on a Protected Ground of Discrimination that require an accommodation in relation to services, employment or housing provided by the University. In such cases, the University is required to provide a reasonable accommodation up to the point of undue hardship.

Family Status is defined by the Ontario Human Rights Code as "the status of being in a parent and child relationship". This includes relationships of dependence between adult children and elderly parents.

Students' Role and Responsibilities

When you may need family status-related accommodation

The student should make reasonable efforts to obtain family help and outside support before pursuing an accommodation request. When a student feels that they require family status accommodation, they should connect with their instructor to discuss their situation.

Examples of accommodation can include but are not limited to:

- Allowing a student to miss a tutorial or class without repercussion to care for an elderly parent.
- Allowing a student to reschedule a final exam due to their child requiring an emergency procedure at the hospital.
- Student request to leave class early to pick their child from daycare.

Your instructor may enlist the support of the respective academic program and/or the Department of Equity and Inclusive Communities to determine if a situation is one to be considered on Family Status grounds.

How do I ask for accommodation?

If you require family status-related academic accommodation, you should direct your request for accommodation to your course instructor, ideally, early in the term or as soon as a need for accommodation is known to exist. After receiving your syllabus or course outline, you are encouraged to identify any potential conflicts or modifications and make reasonable efforts to obtain family help and outside support before pursuing an accommodation request.

In your request, you should include the following information:

- State that you are seeking family status academic accommodation.
- Identify the specific course requirements for which you are seeking accommodation for (e.g. midterm, assignment, final exam, etc.).
- Provide information on how the family status related need conflicts with the course, program deliverables, or requirements.
- Provide suggestions for means of satisfying the academic requirement such as alternative dates, extension on assignments, missing tutorial sessions, etc.

If you require academic accommodation for more than one course at the same time, ensure you are connecting with each instructor directly to explore your request. Accommodation for each course may look different depending on the instructor and the structure and requirements of each course.

After I ask for accommodation, what should happen next?

Once you have made your request for accommodation, your instructor will take the necessary steps to explore the accommodation request. At this time, your instructor may ask for additional information to aid in the process. You may also be asked about reasonable efforts made to obtain family help and outside supports.

Asking for accommodation is often just the first step in the accommodation process, and depending on the circumstances, can take time to work out. Thus, it is important to request accommodation as soon as the need for accommodation arises, such as early in the semester or when the final examination schedule is released.

Your proposed or preferred accommodation may not always be what you will get as other reasonable accommodation options must be considered. As the person requesting the academic accommodation, you have a responsibility to co-operate in the accommodation process by participating in this process in good faith and being open and ready to seriously consider different ideas and suggestions.

What if there is a disagreement about my accommodation request?

The accommodation process is a search for what is reasonable and appropriate accommodation. An appropriate accommodation will vary with the circumstances of each case. It is important to keep in mind that your request for accommodation is often just the first step in a collaborative effort to come up with an appropriate solution. This means that you need to be prepared to work with the other side in good faith and respond to questions or issues that may arise as the accommodation process takes place.

If you have concerns, you can schedule a time to meet with an Equity Advisor at Equity and Inclusive Communities. To learn more email equity@carleton.ca or by call (613) 520-5622 to schedule time to speak to an Equity Advisor.

Instructor's Role and Responsibilities

What to do when you receive a family-related accommodation request

Family-status accommodation may involve a temporary or adjusted modification of the elements of the student's academic program (e.g., laboratory, class attendance, assignment, mid-term, final exam, or fieldwork).

Upon receipt of a request for accommodation, you must discuss directly with the student any request for accommodation. If you or the student have further questions or need clarification within the University's Human Rights Policy, please contact Equity and Inclusive Communities (EIC) at equity@carleton.ca or by calling (613) 520-5622 to speak to an Equity Advisor. You can also contact your respective Chair/Director and/or Associate Dean for further guidance.

Further reading and resources

- [Understanding the Duty to Accommodate by the Human Rights Legal Support Centre](#)
- [Human rights and family status by the Ontario Human Rights Commission](#)
- [Policy and guidelines on discrimination because of family status by the Ontario Human Rights Commission](#)