

## **ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION**

### **Statement on Academic Accommodation**

1. Carleton University is committed to providing access to the educational experience in order to promote academic accessibility for all individuals.
2. Academic accommodation policies are one of the ways in which the University implements its Educational Equity Policy and its commitment to sections 11 and 17 of the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, which requires the University in the provision of services (including education) to accommodate individuals on human rights grounds to the point of undue hardship considering the cost, outside sources of funding, if any, and health and safety requirements, if any.
3. Academic accommodation refers to educational practices, systems and support mechanisms designed to accommodate diversity and difference. The purpose of accommodation is to enable students to perform the essential requirements of their academic programs. At no time does academic accommodation undermine or compromise the learning objectives that are established by the academic authorities of the University.
4. Academic accommodation is assessed and provided on an individual basis. The University is committed to maintaining confidentiality to the greatest extent possible when providing academic accommodation and related support services to students.
5. Carleton University endeavors, within the parameters of its mandate as a secular institution, to provide appropriate space for religious or spiritual observance considered integral to a holistic learning environment and, in particular, the University acknowledges the central importance of traditional, cultural and spiritual practices of Aboriginal peoples in sustaining for them the educational vitality of the institution.
6. The University recognizes that students with infectious illnesses have the right to pursue those activities that their medical condition and public health allow, including continuing to study. The University does not tolerate discrimination, stigma or harassment on the basis of infectious illness, including HIV/AIDS. Individuals with infectious illness are encouraged to inform University Health and Counselling Services in order that support and accommodation can be arranged as required.
7. The terms of the Academic Accommodation Policies are kept under review by the Senate Committee on Educational Equity.

## **1. Academic Accommodation Policy for Students with Disabilities**

### Principles

1. Carleton University is committed to providing access to the educational experience and accommodation to the point of undue hardship in order to promote academic accessibility for individuals with identified and duly assessed disabilities. The University encourages applications from students with those disabilities within the meaning of the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, including visual, hearing, communication and mobility impairments and learning and other non-visible disabilities.
2. The University affirms its commitment to the physical accessibility of the Carleton campus, and to the assessment of academic accommodation for students with disabilities in order to maintain its leadership among the province's educational institutions in implementing accessibility.
3. The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) is the designated unit at the University for assisting the Carleton community in integrating persons with disabilities into all aspects of Carleton's academic and community life. The PMC provides assessment of academic accommodation, advises students on strategies to open a dialogue with instructors and acts as consultant, facilitator, coordinator and advocate in this area for all members of the University community.
4. The University promotes efforts to accommodate students with disabilities so that they can meet the learning objectives of courses they are taking and be fairly evaluated in their performance.

### Policy

5. In order to secure appropriate academic accommodation, students with disabilities are responsible for identifying their individual needs to the PMC in such a manner as to facilitate an appropriate response from the University.
6. Academic accommodation is assessed and provided on an individual basis. Limitations that are traditionally attributed to a particular disabling condition cannot, and should not, be generalized. The University is committed to maintaining confidentiality to the greatest extent possible when providing academic accommodation and related support services to students.
7. Students with disabilities who request academic accommodation must provide the PMC with relevant professional supporting documentation as determined by the University, generally from a regulated health professional practitioner (e.g., a physician, psychiatrist, clinical psychologist). The documentation must include a statement that the individual has an ongoing, recognized disability that requires academic accommodation. Students with learning disabilities must provide a summary of the results of a complete

psycho-educational assessment conducted by an appropriate registered psychologist. All documentation must be current.

8. Once students with disabilities identify their individual needs for academic accommodation, PMC staff members assess the appropriateness of the student's requests, then formally recommend appropriate means of academic accommodation by means of a "Letter of Accommodation."

9. A student with a "Letter of Accommodation" should meet with each of their instructors as soon as possible to discuss the academic accommodations recommended and to reach an agreement on an appropriate accommodation for that course. The instructor may contact PMC for further consultation as needed.

10. A student suffering from a serious, disabling illness may request a period of leave from their studies, initially of up to one year or three academic sessions. The parameters and procedures to be followed are those set out in "Student Parental Leave," (sec.III.3) with the necessary adjustments.

### Implementation

11. Members of faculty and instructional staff, supported by administrative staff, share the University's responsibility under the *Ontario Human Rights Code* for academic accommodation of students with disabilities. This policy encourages dialogue between instructors and students as to how the needs of individuals can be accommodated within the terms of legislation and current University guidelines in the area. All such dealings require mutual understanding and respect from the parties involved in the accommodation process.

12. PMC is responsible for coordinating the provision of comprehensive and professional services necessary to respond to the needs of students with disabilities. It is responsible for assessing the needs for academic accommodation of students with disabilities through assessments that are carried out on an individual basis, in accordance with related legislation, and on the basis of relevant professional/medical documentation, information gathered from the student, and evaluation by PMC staff.

13. Practices and procedures in the process of accommodation are available from the PMC.

## Appeal Process

14. In cases regarding academic accommodation of students with disabilities, any dispute unresolved by discussion between the student and instructor may be appealed first to the Department Chair or School Director and thereafter to the Dean of the Faculty in which the student is registered. The appeal process is intended to comply with the existing academic appeal mechanism and procedures of the University.

## **2. Academic Accommodation Policy for Student Religious Obligations**

### Principles

1. Carleton University accommodates students who, by reason of religious obligation, must miss an examination, test, assignment deadline, laboratory or other compulsory academic event.

### Policy

2. Students requesting academic accommodation on the basis of religious obligation should make a formal, written request to their instructor(s) for alternative dates and/or means of satisfying requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of any given academic term, or as soon as possible after a need for accommodation is known to exist, but in no case later than second-last week of classes in that term.

3. When a student's presence is required prior to the date on which classes begin (e.g., for field trips), any student who cannot meet this expectation of attendance for reasons of religious obligation should notify their Instructor in advance.

### Implementation

4. Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor(s) involved. Instructors will make accommodation in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student.

5. Students or instructors who have questions or wish to confirm the eligibility of a religious event or practice should contact Equity Services.

### Appeal Process

6. In cases regarding academic accommodation of students on the basis of religious obligation, any dispute unresolved by discussion between the student and instructor may be appealed, first to the Department Chair or School Director and thereafter to the Dean of the Faculty in which the student is registered. The appeal process is intended to comply with the existing academic appeal mechanism and procedures of the University.

### **3. Academic Accommodation Policy for Students on the Basis of Sex or Family Status: Student Parental Leave**

#### Principles

1. The Student Parental Leave Policy is intended to recognize the need for leave at the time of a pregnancy, birth or adoption and to permit a pause in studies in order to provide full-time care in the first year of parenting a child or for health-related parental responsibilities.

#### Policy: Graduate Students

2. Either parent may request up to three terms of leave, which must be completed within 12 months of the date of birth or custody or request for leave for health-related family responsibilities. Where both parents are Graduate students seeking parental leave, the total number of terms of leave may not exceed four.

3. While on parental leave, Graduate students do not register or pay fees to Carleton University. Students on parental leave who wish to make use of library, e-mail, Carleton Central, or other university facilities or consult their supervisor or other faculty members should consult the Dean of their Faculty or the Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs.

4. Graduate students on parental leave are not eligible to receive fellowship or scholarship support from Carleton University but they may defer their fellowships or scholarships until they return from leave. In the case of other fellowships or scholarships, the regulations of the particular granting agency will apply. Teaching and research assistantships are subject to the provisions of the CUPE 4600 Collective Agreement.

5. The terminal date of the degree program in which the Graduate student is registered will be extended by the duration of the parental leave taken. Normally, the start and finish of the leave will coincide with the beginning and end of a term.

#### Policy: Undergraduate Students

6. No formal application for parental leave is required by undergraduate students unless the absence is expected to extend beyond 9 terms or 3 years. Undergraduate students are permitted to be absent from studies, for any reason, for a period of 9 consecutive terms and will not be removed from their degree program during this time period. Degree students who have been away from the university for more than nine consecutive terms must apply for readmission through Admission Services.

Note: students registered in an Honours project should contact their honours supervisor before taking a leave of absence.

### Implementation

7. Graduate students may apply for parental leave in writing to the Graduate Registrar's Office of the Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs. Appropriate documentation (e.g., medical and/or legal) must be attached.

8. Special needs or circumstances not covered by the terms of the Policy should be brought to the attention of the Faculty Dean to facilitate appropriate resolution.

9. Where a continuing student (graduate or undergraduate) who is pregnant requires a temporary modification of the conditions of her academic program (e.g., laboratory or field work) that can be accommodated without compromising the integrity of her overall program of studies, every reasonable effort to the point of undue hardship will be made to accommodate her, in consultation between the student and her instructor or supervisor, if necessary assisted by the Department Chair or School Director and/or Faculty Dean. Equity Services may also be consulted and provide advice and assistance.

### Appeal Process

10. In cases regarding academic accommodation of students (graduate or undergraduate) on the basis of sex or family status, any dispute unresolved by discussion between the student and instructor may be appealed first to the Department Chair or School Director and thereafter to the Dean of the Faculty in which the student is registered. The appeal process is intended to comply with the existing academic appeal mechanism and procedures of the University.