

## POLICY AND PROCEDURES

<b>POLICY NAME:</b> <b>Accessible Learning</b>	<b>POLICY NUMBER:</b> 2.2.4	<b>CATEGORY:</b> Administration
<b>RESPONSIBLE EXECUTIVE:</b> Chief Academic Officer	<b>APPROVAL AUTHORITY:</b> Senior Leadership Team	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE:</b> September 1, 2020
<b>NEXT FULL REVIEW DATE:</b> August 31, 2025	<b>REVISED:</b> November 9, 2023	<b>REPLACES:</b>

### **Purpose**

This policy establishes the practices and guidelines for Coquitlam College (the College) to create and promote an environment of equal opportunity and inclusion for all students.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to all staff and students of the College who are on campus or engaging in College-related activities.

The College complies with the duties and requirements outlined in the BC Human Rights Code, and any other applicable legislation.

### **Policy Statements**

1. The College will consider academic accommodation for students who are deemed to be unable to perform the essential requirements of their academic programs.
2. The College will support students with academic accommodation in a manner that respects their dignity, privacy and autonomy.
3. The College's duty to accommodate is limited to providing reasonable academic accommodation without undue hardship.
4. Academic accommodation will not undermine or compromise the learning objectives of a program or course.
5. All students, including those seeking academic accommodation, are responsible for meeting the academic requirements for admission and continuance in their courses, programs or activities.

### **PROCEDURES**

1. The academic accommodation process is a shared responsibility between the student, instructor, and staff, as applicable, and requires collaboration and cooperation between the parties involved in order to provide reasonable academic accommodation.
2. A request for academic accommodation should be made as early as possible, and at least six (6) weeks before the start date of a course, program or activity, where possible.
3. Documentation may be required to assess a request for academic accommodation. Students will be asked to provide consent to release confidential information.
4. Documentation and interviews will determine the most appropriate options in order to allow a student with disabilities to succeed while not undermining school and/or course objectives and standards.

5. Students may request to have a support person accompany them to any interview or discussion with College staff regarding an accommodation for disability.
6. Every reasonable effort will be made to respond to an academic accommodation request in a timely manner. However, delays in notifying the College and submitting a request for academic accommodation could result in a reasonable accommodation not being available in time for the course, program or activity.
7. Requests for academic accommodation may be denied where:
  - a. there is insufficient evidence to support the request
  - b. the student has failed to cooperate in the academic accommodation process or has refused a reasonable academic accommodation proposed by the College
  - c. the requested academic accommodation is not reasonable
8. Students who have been provided with academic accommodation are required to fully participate in the accommodation process.

### **Identifying a Disability**

9. Students are not required to disclose their disability to the College unless they are requesting an academic accommodation.
10. A student may self-identify as a student with disability to the College without requesting an academic accommodation. Where a student discloses a disability to a staff member, the staff member will refer the student to Student Services.
11. When seeking academic accommodation, students are responsible for disclosing their disability to the College in a timely manner.
12. Academic accommodation based on a disability will be considered where medical information is provided and supports the requirement for an accommodation. The nature and extent of the medical information required will depend on individual circumstances.

### **Consent and Records**

13. Students will need to provide written consent to the exchange of information between the College and a qualified health care professional. Refusal to grant consent or provide further information may lead to a delay or denial of a request for academic accommodation.
14. A student's verbal consent to release confidential or medical information may be substituted for written consent in circumstances where there is urgency, major inconvenience, or other relevant circumstance. Verbal consent must be documented in the confidential student record and include the specifics of what was consented to.
15. Supporting documentation and the information contained therein cannot be shared without the student's express consent. The Student may refuse to consent to such disclosure without penalty, hardship, or academic consequence.
16. Only the minimum information needed to implement an approved academic accommodation will be shared with Instructor or staff for the purposes of arranging academic accommodation.
17. Confidential student records will be kept separate from educational and other College files.
18. Disability and medical information, other than that which is voluntarily disclosed by students on their application, registration or admissions forms, is not posted or stored on the student information system.

### **Requesting an Academic Accommodation**

19. To request academic accommodation:
  - a. Contact the Chief Academic Officer to arrange an initial intake appointment;
  - b. provide current, appropriate, and sufficiently detailed documentation in support of the request (see section below regarding Documentation Requirements for Requesting Academic Accommodation);
  - c. provide consent to release confidential information; and
  - d. meet with the Chief Academic Officer or delegate after the documentation has been evaluated, to discuss, review and consider reasonable academic accommodation.
20. Academic accommodation cannot be granted retroactively. For example, a student cannot request an academic accommodation for an exam or test that the student completed prior to the disclosure of a disability.

### **Documentation Requirements for Requesting Academic Accommodation**

21. Students requesting an academic accommodation are expected to provide appropriate, current and sufficiently detailed documentation to support their request. The documentation must:
  - a. Be current; issued within the last five (5) years or less;
  - b. Be provided by a qualified health care professional with appropriate training, experience, expertise and licensing in the area in which they are providing a professional assessment. The formal report or assessment must be relevant to the disability, written on official letterhead, contain the date(s) on which the assessment was conducted and the name, profession, registration or license number, contact information, or other information to confirm the qualifications of the document provider.
  - c. Cover the nature, severity, prognosis and functional impact of the disability on the student in terms of the student's ability to complete the essential requirements of their course of study at the College, and outline the specific academic accommodation required because of the student's disability; and
22. The College may request additional information if needed to determine reasonable academic accommodation.
23. The student is responsible for any costs associated with testing and/or providing appropriate medical or other documentation in support of an academic accommodation request.

### **Approval of Academic Accommodation Requests**

24. If an academic accommodation is supported based on the determination of the Chief Academic Officer or delegate, an Accommodation Agreement (the Agreement) will be issued. The Agreement will specify the specific accommodation and any other relevant information.
25. If there is a determination that a duty to accommodate does not exist, or where the request for academic accommodation does not constitute reasonable academic accommodation, the student will be advised in writing of the determination and reasons.
26. A copy of the signed accommodation agreement will be given to the student and the Instructor, for the purposes of implementing the approved academic accommodation. A copy will be stored in the confidential student record.
27. In some cases, often when the academic accommodation affects the classroom environment, teaching, or learning resources, it may be necessary for the Chief Academic Officer or delegate to meet with the student and instructor(s) to determine how best to implement the accommodation and resolve concerns.

28. If a student's needs or condition change during the course, program or activity where an academic accommodation is in place, the student is expected to notify the Chief Academic Officer or delegate, and provide any appropriate updated medical documentation. The Chief Academic Officer or delegate will review the information to determine whether the existing academic accommodation should be modified, discontinued or replaced.

### **Appealing the Academic Accommodation Request Decision**

29. If a student disagrees with a decision regarding an academic accommodation request, they are encouraged to informally resolve any concerns they may have directly with the Chief Academic Officer or delegate before proceeding with a formal appeal.
30. If an informal resolution is not possible and/or the student is uncomfortable seeking an informal resolution, they may appeal the decision in writing to the President.
31. The President will review all files, records, and documents related to the decision and may consider additional steps, such as:
- meeting with the student to discuss their concerns;
  - consulting with the Chief Academic Officer or delegate, Instructor, regarding the information relevant to the appeal;
  - requesting new documentation or supporting evidence from either party.
32. After consideration of the evidence, the President may:
- confirm the original decision;
  - modify the original decision including changing approved reasonable academic accommodation or their limitations;
  - grant a new academic accommodation;
  - revoke an academic accommodation; and/or
  - take any other steps they consider reasonable and appropriate in the circumstances.
33. The President's decision will be communicated in writing to the Student, with appropriate rationale. The President's decision is final.

### **Definitions**

Academic Accommodation: A change or alteration in the physical environment, or an adaptation of teaching, assessment or evaluation procedures, which is designed to meet the needs of a Student.

Disability: A person who has been diagnosed by an appropriate healthcare professional as having:

- a mental health impairment;
- physical impairment;
- neurological impairment;
- learning disorder; or
- sensory impairment,

any of which may be permanent or temporary and is likely to continue while the student is engaged in a course of study at the College and may significantly interfere with educational or academic pursuits.

Essential Requirement: A requirement of a course, program or activity that is normally required to pass and complete such course, program or activity.

Reasonable Academic Accommodation: An Academic Accommodation may be considered reasonable unless it:

- significantly alters the fundamental nature or the academic standards, essential requirements, or integrity of their course, program or activity;
- has a significant adverse impact on learning opportunities for other students;
- imposes a threat to personal or public safety; or
- results in undue hardship to the College; a particular course, program or activity; the Instructor or other Students.

Student: A person who has completed an application to the College and has received a student number.

Confidential Student Record: A file held by Student Services that contains information relating to a student's non-academic information; may include reports relating to disability, accommodation or misconduct.

### **Related Documents**

- [2.3.1 Examinations](#)
- [BC Human Rights Code](#)
- [Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#)