

Policy Regarding Physical Structural and Pedagogical Limitations

Accommodation for CCS Students with Disabilities

Introduction

The Centre for Christian Studies is committed to being as accessible as possible to students, staff and volunteers who have various disabilities and special needs. As new situations emerge, the school is committed to overcoming as many barriers to full participation as possible, recognizing that there are some limitations that may not be able to be overcome. Efforts will be made by CCS to work cooperatively with Church structures to access additional resources to assist in making those adaptations which are possible, but it is expected that students will also carry responsibility for seeking additional resources.

Policy for Students with Special Needs

1. The Centre for Christian Studies will make its courses and programs accessible to students with disabilities up to, but not beyond, the point of undue hardship. Costs related to reasonable accommodation will be considered in the context of CCS as a whole.
2. Any student requiring special accommodation is required to request the needed accommodation in a timely manner and provide the necessary documentation concerning their disability from a qualified assessor. This may include current and past information.
3. CCS shall provide reasonable accommodation to students without compromising the educational outcomes of the course or program. CCS Program Staff are responsible for supporting accommodation plans to enable students to engage as fully as possible in the CCS program. As with any other student, a student with a disability or learning challenge will be evaluated in the process of completing a course and/or achieving a diploma or certificate. The student must meet established standards in accordance with the educational outcomes and course requirements.
4. CCS will treat all information regarding student disabilities/learning challenges as confidential, except where disclosure is necessary to consider and implement the accommodation requested.
5. CCS will provide support, resources and information to its staff and committees dealing with accommodation issues so they are familiar with CCS policies, legal responsibilities and broader issues regarding persons with disabilities.

Definitions

Reasonable Accommodation: Reasonable accommodation in this context means adjusting teaching and learning strategies in a course, program, policy, procedure or the physical environment that adversely affects a student with a disability without compromising essential educational outcomes. Such accommodations must be provided in a way that most respects the dignity of the student with a disability or learning challenge to the point of undue hardship to the institution.

Undue hardship: The duty to reasonably accommodate special needs is often described in human rights law as “accommodation short of undue hardship”. The obligation to accommodate a special need is met

when the hardship of accommodation becomes undue or unreasonable. In determining whether reasonable accommodation to the point of undue hardship has been made, such factors as financial costs of accommodation, business efficacy, health and safety concerns, interchangeability of employees and facilities, impact on other protected rights and benefit of the accommodation. Accommodations that result in violations of protected rights of other employees, customers or tenants will be considered unreasonable.

Limits

A. Structural Limitations

In the cases where inaccessibility caused by physical structures limits a student's participation, alternatives will be negotiated when this is possible.

Woodsworth House, the primary CCS administrative setting, is wheelchair accessible on the main floor (meeting minimally code requirements) but the basement and second floor, where the library, some staff offices and meeting spaces are located, are not. At this point, wheelchair access to the basement and second floor are not possible. Continued efforts will be made to utilize buildings for programming that are adequately accessible. However, this may not always be possible because of other factors such as the cost for students when residential accommodation is required, the availability of accommodation in the vicinity of the learning site, or during Global Perspectives Experiences. Students are expected to find their own accommodation for most of the programs. It may not always be possible to find accommodation that is close to an accessible learning site.

B. Pedagogical Limitations

Certain pedagogical realities limit CCS's ability to offer programs to everyone who wants to be a student. In cases where physical abilities or cognitive disabilities affect a student's participation, alternatives will be negotiated when this is possible. However, as a small institution, with limited resources, the pedagogical model of the program cannot be adapted for all individual learning needs.

Protocols

A. Pedagogical

1. While educational programs have been designed and tested to meet the needs of most learners, they will not fit all learners' needs. CCS programs are designed for those who can participate, in English, at a university graduate level of writing, comprehending, listening and speaking. Programs require an ability to participate in symbolic learning, to use active modalities, and to learn through the use of audiovisuals. Adaptation to some program requirements can be made but adaptation may be limited.

2. Students may undertake the Diploma program on a part time basis. It may be possible to extend the time for particular program requirements to be met during the theme years. However, full-time participation is required during certain periods, including the intensive learning circles. A policy has been

developed with regard to equivalency for sessions missed due to illness, bereavement, or personal emergencies.

3. Students who require testing as a result of an existing or emerging disability to ascertain if they can continue to learn in and through the program, are expected to make arrangements for this testing. CCS does not have financial resources to cover the costs of this testing.

4. Students requesting consideration for specific learning support or adaptation will be asked to provide an assessment report from a qualified assessor in order to assist the CCS staff in responding to the request.

5. In some circumstances, CCS will seek to be flexible in its implementation of this policy, particularly in the area of required documentation. In these instances, what documentation might be required can be negotiated with and determined by the Special Needs Advisor. These circumstances would be determined on an individual basis without setting precedence or prejudice for future cases.

B. Support for Learners

1. CCS Program Committee will designate a person to support those with disabilities and learning challenges. This person will be referred to as a Special Needs Advisor. Normally, the Special Needs Advisor will not be one of the regular Program Staff but will be familiar with the CCS program.

2. The Special Needs Advisor will normally have experience in issues of accommodation related to persons with disabilities in higher education. It is expected that he or she will volunteer her or his time to CCS for this responsibility, but she or he may be given an honorarium for services.

2. Assessment Reports will be received by the Special Needs Advisor. Students who request flexibility in documentation requirements must be in contact with Special Needs Advisor (refer to #5 of the Pedagogical Protocol).

3. The Special Needs Advisor, upon receipt of the Assessment report, or request for accommodation, will review the report, meet with the student and together they will create an Accommodation Plan. This Plan will outline what reasonable accommodation might look like for the individual student. The Special Needs Advisor will also discuss with the student how the student wants to share their accommodation needs with their student colleagues, and what support the institution can offer in this respect. Copies of the Accommodation Plan will be made for the student and Program Staff, with originals kept in student's file.

4. The Special Needs Advisor will then meet with the Program Staff to share the accommodation plan for the student requesting accommodation. The Special Needs Advisor will also meet with any CCS contracted staff who work with the student (e.g. outside markers) to outline the Accommodation Plan for this student. At the student's request, the Special Needs Advisor may try to connect with other learning institutions (i.e. where the student is taking externals) to share the accommodation needs.

5. The Special Needs Advisor will provide ongoing liaison and resource for students and CCS Program Staff.

6. If in a given academic year, a Special Needs Advisor cannot be found by the Program Committee, Program Staff will work with the students requiring accommodation. Students working directly with Program Staff on Accommodation Plans are encouraged to have an advocate from their own support system or community, or a graduate of the CCS program who has had a similar need for accommodation, for support as they work out their Plan.

C. Information sharing

1. The "Introduction" paragraph of Policy Regarding Physical Structural and Pedagogical Limitations and the definition of reasonable accommodation will be shared widely so those considering the program have information on CCS limitations i.e. through the Website, on application forms, and in any program information

2. CCS will treat all information regarding student disabilities/learning challenges as confidential, except where disclosure is necessary to consider and implement the accommodation requested, and as outlined in item 3 following.

3. When a student is demonstrating disabilities which result in a barrier to learning or which are impeding progress through the program, CCS may inform those in the Church structures who hold responsibility for the education and formation of the student.

Appendix to Policy Regarding Physical Structural and Pedagogical Limitations

Summary of RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE INSTITUTION

1. The Centre for Christian Studies (CCS) has responsibility to make its courses and programs accessible to students up to the point of undue hardship. Costs related to reasonable accommodation will be considered in the context of CCS as a whole.

2. CCS shall provide reasonable accommodation to students without compromising the educational outcomes of the course or program.

3. CCS shall provide information about its policy regarding Physical, Structural and Pedagogical Limitations, services and accommodation already available to each student.

4. CCS is responsible for designating someone to review all documentation to ensure that recommendations and decisions about accommodations are based on appropriate information and diagnostic assessment. CCS Program Staff are responsible for supporting student accommodation plans.

5. CCS will treat all information regarding student disabilities/learning challenges as confidential, except where disclosure is necessary to consider and implement the accommodation requested.

6. CCS will provide support, resources and information to its staff and committees dealing with accommodation issues so they are familiar with CCS policies, legal responsibilities and broader issues regarding persons with disabilities.

Summary of RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT

1. Each student is responsible for his or her own learning, and is responsible for requesting special accommodation.
2. Each student is responsible for providing the necessary documentation concerning their disability from a qualified assessor, as required. This may include current and past information.
3. The student should bring the request for accommodation or a change in accommodation to the attention of appropriate personnel in a timely manner in order to allow for arrangement of accommodations.
4. The student is responsible for applying for available funding from other sources, and for assigning that funding to CCS to the extent that services for the accommodation are provided by CCS.
5. As with any other student, a student with a disability or learning challenge will be evaluated in the process of completing a course and/or achieving a diploma or certificate. The student must meet established standards in accordance with the educational outcomes and course requirements.