Accessible Learning Centre

STUDENT GUIDE

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# Accessible Learning Centre Mandate

The Accessible Learning Centre is committed to assisting students with disabilities to reach their full academic potential. By offering a variety of services and resources delivered in a respectful, confidential and professional manner, we support and encourage students’ independence and self-determination.

Maintaining the academic integrity of courses is paramount. Accommodations recommended by consultants are made without compromising key structural or philosophic components of the course. Students registered with the Accessible Learning Centre must achieve academically to the same standards as other students in their program or faculty.

However, a disability must not put students at a disadvantage. Under the Ontario Human Rights Code, students with disabilities must have the same opportunity to learn as their non-disabled peers.

Every person has the right to equal treatment with respect to services, goods and facilities without discrimination because of race, ancestry, place of origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or handicap.

*— Revised Statutes of Ontario, 1990, 19, s.1*

Accommodations are put into place to level the playing field, not to give an advantage over others.

# Student Responsibilities

The student shall co-ordinate requests for, and assists in the provision of accommodations by:

* Identify themselves to the Accessible Learning Centre and discuss whether an accommodation will allow them to meet the essential requirements of a course/program;
* Discuss with the ALC any required accommodations in a timely manner;
* Provide any relevant and recent psychological or medical documentation (from an approved and regulated health professional) to substantiate their disability and any resultant restrictions;
* Work with the Centre, instructors, and others to develop an appropriate accommodation plan for each term;
* Use their WLU email account for communication with the ALC, staff and faculty on campus;
* Follow the procedures outlined in the policy for academic accommodations for undergraduate students, when an accommodation is required, and comply with the Centre’s instructions related to the implementation of any specific accommodation;
* Meet with instructors as needed to discuss arrangements for accommodations.

# Confidentiality

Pursuant to section 39 (2) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, information is collected under the legal authority of the Wilfrid Laurier University Act to administer the university-student relationship. Information will be used for administrative and statistical purposes, and determining academic support services.

All information about your disability is kept securely and confidentially within the ALC. Registration with Accessible Learning will not be noted on any official university records. Due to privacy regulations, students must consent before the Centre may discuss their individual needs or release information related to their disability to faculty, administration, professionals or family. There are rare exceptions to this policy, where the release of information, with or without consent, may be required by law.

# Accessible Learning Centre Responsibilities

The Centre shall co-ordinate requests for, and assist in, the provision of accommodations by:

* Receiving and verifying a student’s psychological or medical documentation, which will be provided by an approved and regulated health professional and is recent and relevant in nature;
* Reviewing all documentation and consulting with each student individually to determine if (s)he qualifies for services;
* Providing academic support and counselling to students with disabilities when requested;
* Assisting and providing information to instructors, chairs, associate deans or his/her delegate and other administrative staff as needed;
* Ensuring that all student information and all medical and psychological documentation is treated confidentially, subject to disclosure as necessary to effect the accommodation or as required by law, and maintained in individual student files within the Centre;
* Where appropriate, developing a proposed accommodation plan, based on the student’s needs and available course/program information and requirements,
* Communicating the proposed accommodation plan in writing by confidential email to the instructor(s)/ department(s) as appropriate and in a timely fashion.

— Section II.9 of *Policy for Academic Accommodation of*

*Undergraduate Students with Disabilities*, approved by Senate, May 11, 2005.

# Documentation Requirements

When registering with the Accessible Learning Centre you must present current documentation from a registered health-care professional (physician, psychologist or psychiatrist). Students registering with the Centre for academic support on a temporary basis must provide medical documentation (as defined below) including the anticipated recovery period. Updated documentation may be required from time to time. Students seeking support for learning disabilities must provide a current psycho-educational assessment (within the last 3 years) by a qualified psychologist, while students seeking support for mental health issues are required to provide documentation relevant to their current experience.

Current documentation must include:

* Clear identification and confirmation of a disability from a licensed health care professional qualified to diagnose conditions (e.g., family doctor, psychiatrist, psychologist, or psychological associate);
* An indication that the disability impedes or impairs academic functioning;
* Specific recommendations on appropriate academic accommodations as they relate to the disability

Note: While IPRC and IEP documentation from secondary school is sufficient to receive interim accommodation (maximum 90 days), an assessment will be required for continuing accommodation. Interim accommodations may be renewed or extended in extenuating circumstances. Further information regarding documentation requirements is available on the [ALC website](https://accessiblelearning.wlu.ca/registration/documentation-requirements.html).

# Accessible Learning Centre Services

## The Accommodation Plan

The accommodation plan details the services and supports that will be put in place or made available to you based upon the documentation provided. Possible inclusions in an accommodation plan are note-takers, referrals to learning strategist or assistive technologist, exam accommodations, future meeting times, or other university or community services, etc. The plan will clearly indicate which items/tasks are your consultant’s responsibility and which are your responsibility. Each plan is unique and geared specifically to you.

At the start of successive academic years please remember to complete the Online Express Registration form should you wish to remain registered with the ALC and access accommodations. The form is located on the [ALC Online Forms website](https://web.wlu.ca/alconline/login.php).

### Interim Accommodations

An Interim Accommodation Plan may be put in place while waiting for the student to provide more complete documentation. This allows students to access ALC services and accommodations within a set timeline while providing appropriate documentation.



Sample Accommodation Plan

Student:

Consultant:

Activation Date:

**Summary of Challenges/Support Needs and Strengths**

* Student has a learning disability and ADHD (inattentive subtype)
* Experiences challenges with concentration, needs to reach material several times before comprehension
* Spelling is an issue, words often misspelled and missed when proofing essays
* Often takes longer to complete tasks and assignments, poor organization and procrastination
* Takes medication to assist with disability symptoms; helps to keep symptoms under control. New situations are often challenging
* Good awareness of when student needs to seek assistance or ask for help; good self-awareness.

**Accommodations and Actions**

* Student will write exams in a small classroom setting on a computer with access to spellcheck and will receive an additional 15 minutes extra per hour.
* Student will book all exams by given deadlines.
* Referral to Assistive Technologist (AT) to being trial of Kurzweil for one course (as this program has not been used before). Effectiveness will be reviewed to determine consideration for other courses. Purchase of this software is subject to funding.
* Student to apply for OSAP to determine eligibility for BSWD.
* Referral to Learning Strategist (LS), initial meeting booked to explore Cornell note-taking, reading strategies, and organizational strategies.
* Note-takers will be requested by student at the beginning of each term on MyLearningSpace. Student will attend all classes.
* Student to contact consultant with questions/concerns as needed.

**Accommodation Review and Outcomes**

**New Accommodations and Actions**

**Skill Development Summary: Learning Strategies**

**Skill Development Summary: Assistive Technology & Alternate-Format Services**



**Can an accommodation plan be changed or reviewed?**

Accommodation plans are active documents and can be changed or reviewed upon initiation by either the student or their consultant. It is important that the student keep their consultant updated of any health or learning changes and when new documentation is received.

**How will I remember what is on my plan?**

Once the accommodation plan is completed, both you and your consultant will sign it. A copy of the plan will be given to you for your records.

**Who has access to my plan?**

Your plan is held in your confidential Accessible Learning Centre file. It may be shared internally with the learning strategist, assistive technologist or educational planner, depending upon the supports outlined in the plan.

*•* A summary email outlining your registration with ALC and listing your accommodations is sent to your professors at the start of each term. No personal information is included.

*•* Graduate students’ accommodations are also sent via email to the departmental graduate coordinator, their supervisor, and the Graduate Studies Office for collaboration and to ensure that the essential course/program requirements have not been compromised.

**Are accommodations available for spring/intersession/summer terms too?**

Yes, the ALC offers accommodations according to your accommodation plan through all terms in the academic year. Due to compressed timelines for these terms, let your consultant know when you register for courses in these terms to ensure access to your accommodations.

## The Consultant’s Role

Consultants play a key role in the development and implementation of the accommodation plan. They work directly with you to determine appropriate academic supports. All needs related to exam accommodations, note-taking, faculty liaison, assignments, bursaries for disability-related services or technology, referrals for tutors, learning strategist and assistive technology support, go through your consultant. If you are not sure who to ask, they are a good start and will point you in the right direction.

**How and when should I contact my consultant?**

During your first year at Laurier we recommend you see your consultant regularly to assist with the transition to university. Otherwise, it depends on your needs which can be discussed with your consultant. If you have a concern about a particular area that is directly related to your disability, don’t wait for it to become a problem. The earlier you contact your consultant about any concerns, the better we are able to work with you towards a solution.

**I have an exam conflict directly related to my disability. Now what do I do?**

Notify your consultant about any exam conflicts related to your disability by the applicable exam booking deadline. They will assist you in completing the necessary next steps to shift, reschedule or defer the exam appropriately, if permitted.

**What do you mean by exam conflicts?**

There are three primary types of exam conflicts:

1. Two exams directly overlap due to time extension,
2. Three final exams that beginning and end within 24 hours,
3. Where spacing of exams is an approved accommodation based on documentation (e.g., no more than one exam in a 24-hour period).

Exam conflicts due to vacations, weddings or other non-disability related needs are **NOT** addressed by the ALC. Students are to follow up with their course instructor in these cases.

**My assignment is due, but I have had a flare-up in my condition and can’t hand it in on time. Help!**

Students are encouraged to be proactive and speak directly to their professor and consultant in advance of the due date to seek the most appropriate support. This may involve learning strategy support to assist with organization and managing procrastination, assistive technology software or symptom management support. If you need an extension, ask your professor directly and well in advance, if possible. If you are not sure how to go about connecting with your instructor, talk to your consultant. Where appropriate, your consultant will liaise with faculty to help support your extension request and to provide clarification concerning your recent difficulties.

**I need to petition!**

If you will be petitioning for any reason directly connected to your disability, contact your consultant for assistance, as there are several steps to complete.

## Exam Accommodations

### General Information

Examination accommodation is the most widely used service by students registered with the Accessible Learning Centre. Tests, in-class exams/essays are accommodated if they are 30 minutes or longer. The same booking process and procedures relate to test accommodations.

Exams accommodated through Accessible Learning are scheduled at the same date and time as the class, to maintain academic integrity and follow the policy directives established by the University Registrar’s Examinations Department. The same code of conduct for student behaviour applies within the ALC and any acts of academic misconduct will be reported to the course instructor and/or department.

### Deadlines and Schedules

Students are required to book all tests/exams by the posted deadlines. Check your course syllabus at the beginning of the term for test/exam dates. Deadlines are posted in the main office, the ALC website, the back of your ALC identification card, and extensively across campus. Online booking forms are available at the [ALC Online Forms website](https://web.wlu.ca/alconline/login.php). Students are encouraged to check for confirmation of their exam bookings by accessing ‘View My Bookings’ at the above link.

Midterm and test schedules are posted three days prior to the exam outside our main office (1C11), and on our website. To locate your booking on the schedule, look down the list for your course code and section, then across to find your ALC Identification number. To use the online exam schedule (link below), simply search using your ALC ID number and your bookings will be filtered. The purpose of your ALC ID number is to enable us to communicate where you will be writing your exam while ensuring confidentiality. Please contact the main office or your consultant if you do not know your ALC ID number. The schedule for the first few days of finals will be posted on the bulletin board outside our main office (1C11) approximately one week before final exams begin. The entire final exam schedule is updated daily and is available at [Waterloo Exam Schedule](https://accessiblelearning.wlu.ca/exams/waterloo-exam-schedule.html?grp_id=14049).

### Expectations for Students

#### Booking Your Exam

* Students are expected to know and follow the deadlines for exam booking. Students booking exams within the posted deadlines will receive their approved accommodations.
* A separate booking for each test/exam must be completed and submitted. Ensure all information is included, as incomplete forms will not be processed.
* To ensure all your tests/exams have been booked properly, review “View My Bookings” online through the [ALC Online Forms website](https://web.wlu.ca/alconline/login.php).
* DO NOT complete bookings for tests/exams scheduled to be written online. See “Online Quizzes” below.
* Inaccurate booking forms consume valuable ALC resources and could potentially breach academic integrity. Accommodations are not guaranteed to students who provide inaccurate information.
* **Final exams can be booked at the start of term. Don’t wait!**
* Contact the office if you have an early in-class test or midterm, before the posted deadlines.
* Check the exam schedule in advance and just prior to writing to make sure nothing has changed. If you find there is a problem, contact the main office in 1C11, immediately.

#### Exam Changes

* Contact your consultant about any exam changes needed that are the result of disability-related barriers (e.g., spacing of exams as indicated in your accommodation plan), to assist you with any questions or provide supporting documentation. Necessary changes/conflicts must be reported to the consultant by the booking deadline to ensure enough time is available to address any issues. Although consultants have no authority to approve changes (this comes from the respective faculty), they will be able to facilitate this process for you.
* If changes are needed for issues unrelated to disability (e.g., religious celebrations), you must follow the faculty petition process.
* You are solely responsible to notify the ALC immediately by email (alexams@wlu.ca) with any announced changes to the date or time of a midterm, test, or in-class essay. Failure to do so could result in your not receiving your accommodations.

#### Start and End Times

* If you are scheduled to write before the rest of your class begins the test, university policy requires that you stay in the room until 30 minutes after the class has started.
* If you arrive late to your exam (i.e., within 30 minutes) you will be permitted to write but you will not be granted additional time at the end of the exam. If your late arrival is beyond 30 minutes, you will not be permitted to write as per university’s examination regulations.

#### Online Quizzes

* Both in-class and online courses sometimes use MyLearningSpace for online quizzes. If you receive extra time for tests/exams, it is your responsibility to let your consultant know about any online quizzes in your courses. To know if your time has been adjusted, check the time given in the title of the exam, which should include your additional time. For example, if the quiz is 60 minutes long and you receive an additional 20 minutes per hour, the time listed should be 80 minutes.

#### What to Bring to the Exam

* Photo identification, preferably your OneCard.
* Pens, pencils, erasers, calculator (if permitted), tissue, or any item you may require while writing the exam. These materials are not provided by the ALC.
* No electronic or communication devices will be allowed in the examination room, including cell phones, iPhones, iPads, iPods, USBs, etc. Please note that should any device be found on a student, it will be treated as academic misconduct and student will be subject to [disciplinary procedures and sanctions](http://legacy.wlu.ca/page.php?grp_id=2505&p=11452) described in the university academic calendar.

#### Exam Integrity

* The ALC takes exam security seriously and works actively to ensure academic integrity is maintained.
* If you have questions for your instructor during a test or exam, advise the proctor and every effort will be made to contact your instructor. Proctors are not permitted to answer or interpret exam questions.
* Students are expected to write their examinations in an honest and straightforward manner. Any irregularities will be documented and reported. Where there are reasonable grounds for believing a violation of exam protocol has occurred (e.g. notes found in a washroom), the candidate will be subject to [disciplinary procedures and sanctions](http://legacy.wlu.ca/page.php?grp_id=2505&p=11452) described in the university academic calendar.

#### Penalty for Missed Exams

* If you will not be writing an exam that you have booked with us (dropped course, sick, decided to write with class), cancel your booking at https://web.wlu.ca/alconline at least 48 hours in advance. Failure to write a booked exam without notifying the ALC may result in a $50 fine.

#### Illness

* If you are ill on the day of a test, midterm or final exam, you must obtain a medical note (dated the day of the exam) from the Student Wellness Centre, your family physician, or a walk-in clinic. Inform your instructor and your consultant that you will not be writing and cancel the exam online through the ‘View My Bookings’ page on the [ALC exam booking website](https://web.wlu.ca/alconline/login.php).
* Should you become ill during an exam, inform the proctor. If you are unsure about your health before you begin an exam, DO NOT open the exam envelope.
* Students are responsible for following university procedures regarding rescheduling missed exams (if permitted).

#### Code of Conduct

* Students are expected to be respectful to the proctors and to the other students writing in the exam room. Disrespectful behaviour will not be tolerated. Students are subject to [disciplinary procedures and sanctions](http://legacy.wlu.ca/page.php?grp_id=2505&p=11452) described in the university academic calendar.

#### Emergency Closure

* No exams will be written if the university is closed. Closure of the university is announced on the Laurier homepage. Exams cancelled due to closure will be rescheduled. Students are expected to check their Laurier email regularly for updates regarding rescheduling arrangements.

### Information on Approved Accommodations

Your consultant will review your approved accommodations with you. Accommodations are based on the documentation received and are not subject to change (or interpretation) without approval of the consultant.
A brief summary of some common accommodations and how they are implemented follows.

1. **USE OF A COMPUTER**. Only ALC computers will be used (desktops or laptops, depending on location and availability). The spell-check function of MS Word will be available only to students with grammar, spelling and punctuation considerations as an accommodation. For all others, the function will be disabled.

Students are encouraged to save their work frequently to avoid loss of vital information. It is the student’s responsibility to print the exam before exam time has elapsed. Students are advised to sign the last page of their exam to ensure all pages were printed properly.

1. **MEMORY AIDS OR CUE SHEETS** are permitted only if recommended with rationale provided in a neuro-psychological or psycho-educational assessment and in consultation with your consultant. Students are required to attend a workshop on memory aid development and follow set procedures. Memory aids must be approved and signed by the professor (student’s responsibility), and submitted to the consultant three (3) days prior to the exam. Remember to indicate “memory aid” on your booking form.
2. **LISTEN TO MUSIC DURING THE EXAM**. This must be a commercially pressed CD, used only on a portable CD player. It must be vetted by ALC exam staff at least 48 hours prior to the exam and noted in the “Other” box of the booking form. Students with this accommodation will provide their own headphones. No MP3s or IPods will be permitted.
3. **IF NOISE-CANCELLING HEADSETS** are needed, students are expected to provide their own.
4. Students are responsible for ensuring they are familiar with **ASSISTIVE SOFTWARE** (e.g., Dragon, Kurzweil, Jaws or ZoomText) before the exam date. Proctors do not train during the exam. For Dragon, students must train and test the headset and computer they will be using for dictation at least two weeks prior to the exam.

Students are responsible to manage their time during the exams. Students are recommended to bring watches to assist with time management. Exams must be submitted to proctor when the time has elapsed.

### Finding the Exam Location



|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **EXAM LOCATIONS** | **DIRECTIONS** |
| 230 Regina Street | On Regina Street down from 202 Regina, towards University Avenue. A low brown structure with “230” above the entrance. |
| 232 King StreetB01, B02 and B03 | Cross King Street at the lights by the AC or Alumni Field. 232 King is the building next door to Phil’s. Exam space is in the basement and there are signs posted. |
| IC8 | Arts Building, C Wing, main floor. Down the hall from the main office (1C11). |
| 1C15 Computer Lab | Located on the left just down the hall from main office (1C11) |
| 1C17 | Arts Wing, around the corner from 1C11. |
| P XXXX | Peters Building. From the main office turn right and go down the hall, up the stairs, continuing to the left. |
| SBE XXXX | School of Business and Economics, aka Schlegel Building, located on the other side of the Peters Building. |
| 192 King Street | Rooms are located on the lower (basement) level of the Career and Co-op Building, beside the King St. Residence at the corner of King St. and Lodge St. |

Further information about examinations is available on the [ALC website](https://accessiblelearning.wlu.ca/exams/faq.html).

## Learning Strategies

Learning support is offered in individualized sessions and group workshops in the following areas:

* Writing support
* Studying and reading
* Exams
* Time and self-management
* Organizational skills
* Coping skills for the classroom, groups, exams and studying

## Alternate-Format Services

Alternate-format course materials include electronic text (e-text), Braille or other formats such as captioned video. Your accommodation plan that you created with your consultant will indicate if you require alternate-format materials. More information on alternate-format materials can be found on the [ALC website](https://accessiblelearning.wlu.ca/accommodation/alternate-format-services.html).

## Assistive Technology

The ScotiaBank Assistive Technology lab, located in Arts 2C7, offers students the ability to:

* Explore how equipment and software might assist learning,
* Get tutorials and tips on software and devices,
* Receive help for problems with software or devices
* Borrow equipment and software

More information about assistive technology and the ScotiaBank Assistive Technology lab is available on the [ALC website](https://accessiblelearning.wlu.ca/accommodation/assistive-technology.html).

## Note-Takers

The Centre coordinates a volunteer note-taking service for registered students with disabilities who have been approved for this classroom accommodation. Students are to initiate this service at the beginning of each term by completing a request form on MyLearningSpace.

Students receiving notes are bound by the following terms:

* Attend all classes (unless unable due to illness);
* Recognize that notes are supplemental to their own notes;
* Notes are for their use alone and are not to be shared or sold;
* Provide feedback on note-takers and inform ALC of any concerns;
* Notify the Centre if they drop the course or if the professor posts notes on MyLearningSpace.

While every effort is made to fill all note-taker requests, the Centre cannot guarantee that volunteers will come forward for every class. More information about note-taking can be found on the [ALC website](https://accessiblelearning.wlu.ca/accommodation/note-taking.html).

## Tutoring

Registered students requiring tutoring assistance for concept reinforcement or exam review should contact their consultant regarding the process before they hire a tutor. Tutors are paid an hourly fee. Your consultant will refer you to the educational planner who will inform you regarding tutor availability. More information about tutoring can be found on the [ALC website](https://accessiblelearning.wlu.ca/accommodation/tutoring.html).

## Peer Support Program

Students registered with the Centre receive volunteer support contact through their university
experience. The peer support team is made up of experienced senior students who may or may not be registered with the ALC. The volunteers are selected for their leadership ability, strong communication and problem-solving skills. More information about the Peer Support Program is available on the [ALC website](https://accessiblelearning.wlu.ca/accommodation/sudent-support.html).

## Faculty Liaison

Students with disabilities are encouraged to become their own advocates. It is recommended you meet with your instructors early each term to discuss your need for accommodation in general and only disclose information that you are comfortable sharing (e.g. students are not required or expected to disclose their diagnosis to their instructors). The Centre will contact your instructors via email to formally document the accommodations you receive in exams and in the classroom. When less-common accommodations are recommended (memory aids, audio recording of lectures, etc.) your consultant will contact your instructors on your behalf.

# Financial Matters

Students with disabilities may incur expenses that their peers do not. The Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and Wilfrid Laurier University assist students with such disability-related costs. The following financial assistance is available to students with disabilities at Laurier.

## Bursary for Students with Disabilities (BSWD)

The federal and provincial governments jointly fund the Bursary for Students with Disabilities (BSWD). This bursary provides a maximum of $10,000 per academic year for academic supports and services. Application to the bursary is supervised and approved at the discretion of the consultants.

To qualify for the BSWD, you must apply and qualify for the Ontario Student Assistance Plan (OSAP), be enrolled in a minimum 40% course load in the current academic term, and be registered with the Centre. Funding from the BSWD covers disability-related costs not included in OSAP assistance (e.g., psycho-educational assessment, tutors or one-time purchase of assistive devices such as computers [if tied to a demonstrated need for assistive software], software, digital recorders, etc.). Unlike OSAP, the BSWD does not need to be repaid.

All students are encouraged to apply for OSAP, even if they believe they have sufficient funds available to cover their costs while at university. An OSAP application for part-time or full-time studies can be completed on the [OSAP website](https://osap.gov.on.ca/).

## Accessible Learning Accommodation Bursary (ALAB)

Students registered with the Centre, but who do not qualify for OSAP, may be eligible for the Accessible Learning Accommodation Bursary. This funding assists in meeting similar disability-related expenses as the BSWD, however, the amount available is limited. This is a needs-based bursary and students are encouraged to speak with their consultant at the start of the term regarding eligibility. Application to this bursary is supervised and approved at the discretion of the consultants.

## Student Responsibilities for Bursary Funding

To ensure bursary funding is being used appropriately and adheres to government guidelines, students must provide receipts for any bursary money received. A full explanation of this process is available on the [ALC website](https://accessiblelearning.wlu.ca/financial-aid/index.html). If receipts or repayments of unused funding are not received in a timely manner, a hold may be placed on your Laurier account. To avoid this, please remit receipts/repayments as soon as possible.

Both the BSWD and the ALAB can be used only for approved academic needs related to your disability. They cannot be used for books, housing, tuition or prescriptions. If you are uncertain, speak to your consultant.

## Scholarships for Students with Disabilities

A number of scholarships are available for students with disabilities with various eligibility criteria. Awards can be based on financial need, academic standing, or volunteer commitment. Applications are accepted early in the fall term. For more information on these, and other awards in general, inquire at the Student Awards Office, or on the [Student Awards website](http://wlu.ca/studentawards/index.html).