



STUDENTS WITH DOCUMENTED DISABILITIES

Students with a documented disability qualify for disability or accessibility support services from their college/university and for an extra year of full-time sponsorship if needed. Therefore, if your disability has been documented by and diagnosed by a qualified professional, and you are seeking academic accommodation through the school, it is required that you SELF-IDENTIFY early in your application process and that you meet with Student Services or the Accessibility Services office as soon as possible, preferably before each semester begins. It is essential that you make the school aware of your disability-related educational needs or changes in your disability-related educational needs as soon as possible because many of the additional support services to help you achieve academic success require some time before they can be put in place.

It is strongly recommended that you provide a copy of your latest IEP and an updated psycho-educational assessment that is less than 5 years old to the college/university. You can obtain a copy from your high school.

Self-Identification or Voluntary Identification

Students are strongly encouraged to self-identify or voluntarily identify to Student Services or Accessibility Services at their school as early in the admission process as possible. This is necessary for the school to properly plan accommodations that will equalize opportunities to participate in all learning and evaluation activities within school.

Once self-identification or voluntary identification occurs, students will meet individually with a Counsellor at the school to develop the accommodation plan.

Once documented, special support services from the school can range from note taking, to extra time for writing tests/exams, to writing exams in a separate room, to the use of a note-taker or devices such as a reader, the use of a word processor with appropriate software and/or alternative exam formats.

Please self-identify with both your school's Student Services or Learning Center or Accessibility Services department for full details and please self-identify with the GRFN Education Unit Post-Secondary Counsellor. Some documented disabilities may include (but are not limited to):

- i. Acquired Brain Injury
- ii. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- iii. Vision Disabilities (i.e. blind or Low Vision)
- iv. Chronic illness/systemic/medical (i.e. medical conditions having educational implications can include chronic health problems such as fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome, arthritis, kidney disease, allergies, cardiovascular problems, cancer, diabetes, and AHIV infections, as well as respiratory and gastro-intestinal disorders)
- v. Deaf, deafened, hard of hearing
- vi. Learning Disabilities
- vii. Mental Health Disabilities (i.e. disorders such as adjustment, anxiety, mood, personality, and eating)
- viii. Mobility/Functional (i.e. orthopedic and neurological disorders, cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, spina bifida, spinal injuries, etc)
- ix. Temporary Conditions (i.e. anxiety, broken bones, etc.)



GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

There are Special Bursaries and Grants (non-repayable financial assistance) from the government for students with disabilities and special needs. These bursaries and grants can cover disability-related educational services and equipment that is needed for you to participate in post-secondary education such as note-takers, tutors, interpreters or technical aids while you are in post-secondary studies. All you have to do is apply for OSAP and complete the BSWD/CSG-PDSE application with the Financial Assistance office at your school to determine your eligibility for these special bursaries and grants.

Provided you are eligible for OSAP (even if only \$1.00), you will be eligible for the special services and equipment financial assistance. **You should simply decline the regular financial assistance/student loan that may be available to you from OSAP (to avoid loan payments after your studies) and accept the special bursaries and grants as these are non-repayable.**

Eligible students receive up to \$2,000 from the Bursary for Students With Disabilities (BSWD) and up to \$8,000 from the Canada Study Grant for Services and Equipment for Persons with Permanent Disabilities. These funds are non-repayable and taxable.

To be eligible to apply for assistance through these government programs, you must:

- be a Canadian citizen, a permanent resident, or a Protected Person, and a Ontario resident;
- have applied and be eligible for a Canada-Ontario Integrated Student Loan if you are a full-time student;
- have applied and be eligible for a Part-Time Canada Student Loan or an Ontario Special Bursary if you are a part-time student;
- have a permanent disability (students with a temporary disability may be eligible for BSWD funding only); and
- have additional education-related expenses that result from your disability and are not covered by another agency.

Please visit the website and/or your OSAP / Financial Assistance office at your school for assistance in completing your OSAP application and to get further details.

IMPORTANT:

To avoid debt upon completion of your studies, please know that you do not have to accept any student loans that may be available to you. You can simply decline the loan part of your OSAP application and choose to accept or apply for only the grants.

Please discuss this with the Financial Assistance office about how to accept only the grants and to also learn about any impacts if you withdraw or stop attending.