

Approving University Official(s): Academic Council, Board of Governors
Responsible Office: Dean of Student Success, Academic Accommodations and Accessibility Office
Effective date: November 11, 2019
Last review date: November 4, 2021
Next review date: 3 years

[AC- Academic Accommodations and Accessibility Policy]

Purpose

This Academic Accommodations and Accessibility Policy (the “Policy”) identifies the ways Yorkville University and Toronto Film School, and their affiliates, (collectively, “Yorkville”) meet their commitment to Universal Design and Universal Design for Learning and providing access to students with Disabilities, particularly by making Academic Accommodations that facilitate Accessibility. This Policy also applies to Academic Accommodations for student needs related, but not limited to, other protected human rights grounds such as to Family Status (caregiving responsibilities), Sex (pregnancy/breastfeeding), and Gender Identity and/or Gender Expression, among others (collectively, “Protected Grounds”).

Audience

This Policy applies to all Yorkville students self-identified as having a documented Disability or accommodation needs related to the other Protected Grounds.

Definitions

Capitalized terms used in this Policy are defined below:

Academic Accommodation is any change that enables students with disabilities and other human rights protected needs as per this policy to participate equally in the environment and activities of either a particular class or university life in general. More specifically, an academic accommodation is a modification or extension of a university service made to meet the needs of a student with a disability or other human rights protected need as per this policy without compromising academic integrity.

Accessibility	refers to the design of products, devices, services, or environments, and barrier-removal for people with disabilities.
Barrier	refers to physical, attitudinal, procedural, technological, information and communicational impediments to full access and participation. Barriers may be systemic or individual in nature. Systemic barriers can be described as patterns of behaviour, policies or practices that are part of the structure of an organization, and which create a perpetual disadvantage. Individual barriers can be described as impediments that are not system-wide/related to the system.
Creed/Religion	refers to a particular, comprehensive and overarching system of beliefs that govern one's conduct and practices. It also relates to having a sincerely, freely, and deeply held belief system, and includes Indigenous spirituality. This may include affiliation/connection to an organization or community that professes a shared system of belief. Creed is integrally linked to a person's self-definition and spiritual fulfilment, and addresses ultimate questions of human existence, including ideas about life, purpose, death, and the existence or non-existence of a creator and/or a higher or different order of existence.
Disability	refers to any permanent, temporary, or episodic impairment or functional limitation that restricts a student's ability to undertake the routine activities necessary to participate in learning at Yorkville University/Toronto Film School. Impairments or functional limitations might be physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication, or sensory in nature.
Equality	means providing each individual with the same or similar opportunities and ensuring fairness in processes and outcomes so that each individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their abilities.
Equity	means acknowledging that equal access to opportunities and services may require treating particular individuals and groups differently through the removal of barriers that marginalized equity-seeking communities experience in trying to obtain this access.

Essential Educational Requirements	refers to bona fide (genuine) requirements of a task or program that cannot be altered without compromising the fundamental nature of the task or program.
Family Status	refers to being in a parent and child/parent and child “type” of relationship, that may or may not be based on blood or adoption ties, but that is based on care, responsibility, and commitment. Examples include parents caring for children (also by adoption, fostering and step parenting), people caring for aging parents or relatives with disabilities, and includes families headed by <u>LGBTQI2SA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (or Questioning), Intersex, Two-Spirit (2S), Asexual) persons.</u>
Individual Accommodation Plan	refers to the formalization and documentation of the reasonable accommodation that is arranged between the Academic Accommodations and Accessibility Office and a student. The plan ensures that the parties clearly understand their roles and responsibilities and facilitates accountability and regular monitoring.
Interim Accommodation	refers to cases where it may be necessary to provide interim accommodation while waiting for an accommodation to be put in place or while assessing and exploring a request for accommodation.
Sex	refers to a person's genetic or anatomical sex. For the purposes of accommodation sex also includes pregnancy and breastfeeding.
Gender Identity	refers to each person’s internal and individual experience of gender. It is their sense of being a woman, a man, both, neither, or anywhere along the gender spectrum. A person’s gender identity may be the same as or different from their birth-assigned sex. Gender identity is fundamentally different from a person’s sexual orientation.
Gender Expression	refers to how a person publicly presents their gender. This can include behaviour and outward appearance such as dress, hair, make-up, body language and voice. A person’s chosen name and pronouns are also common ways of expressing gender.
Transgender/Trans	is an umbrella term referring to people with diverse gender identities and expressions that differ from stereotypical gender norms. It includes but is not limited to people who

identify as transgender, trans woman, trans man, transsexual, cross-dresser, gender non-conforming, gender variant, gender-fluid, or genderqueer.

Universal Design (UD)

is the design and composition of environments and educational/informative materials so that it can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people, regardless of their age, size, ability, or disability. An environment (or any building, product, or service in that environment) should be designed to remove barriers and meet the needs of all people who wish to use it. Universal design constitutes the equitable access to information, spaces, objects, environments, and services.

This can also include *Universal Design for Learning*, which is an approach about *teaching* and *learning* that helps give all students an equal opportunity to succeed. This approach offers flexibility in the ways that students access material, engage with it and show what they know.

*The President may direct that definitions be amended from time to time to ensure consistency with public policy and community expectations and standards.

Policy Statement

In accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (“AODA”) and applicable provincial human rights legislation, Yorkville is committed to providing inclusive and accessible education to its students, including those with Disabilities. Yorkville provides accommodations to students with permanent, episodic, and temporary Disabilities to ensure every student has an equal opportunity to pursue academic success. The purpose of the Academic Accommodations and Accessibility Office is to provide customized accommodation plans for students and put supports in place to help ensure student success and to foster a culture of acceptance for all. Academic Accommodations may also pertain to other Protected Grounds such as Creed/Religion (religious observances – also refer to Accommodations for Religious Observance Policy and Procedures), Sex (pregnancy/breastfeeding), Family Status (caregiving responsibilities), Gender Identity and/or Gender Expression (also refer to Gender Inclusion Policy and Procedures), among others.

Yorkville desires to make its programs, courses, and academic services accessible to all who qualify for admission. To that end, Yorkville is committed to:

1. Removing Barriers to access;
2. Deploying inclusive supports that facilitate access for students with disabilities; and

3. Providing Academic Accommodations to students with Disabilities and students with other needs relating to Protected Grounds as per this Policy.

This commitment ensures that all campuses and facilities meet standards required by human rights, accessibility, and privacy laws, and building codes, in the provinces in which the campuses and facilities operate. To deploy inclusive supports that facilitate access for students with Disabilities, Yorkville works to continuously evaluate and improve supports that make its educational services accessible.

Principles and Limitations

Duty to accommodate: Yorkville recognizes its obligation to provide reasonable accommodations, to the point of Yorkville's undue hardship, to students with Disabilities and other needs related to Protected Grounds to ensure that all students have fair and equitable access to education services, courses, programs, and facilities.

Admission to University programs: Applicants in need of accommodations must demonstrate that they meet all admissions requirements, as outlined by the requirements of the specific program in which they wish to enroll. Applicants in need of accommodations are advised to consult the Academic Accommodations and Accessibility Office during the application process.

Academic rigor: Academic Accommodations made to help students with Disabilities and for reasons related to other Protected Grounds will not have the effect of reducing Yorkville's academic standards. The academic rigor of course work and assessments will not be reduced, but could be modified. All students are expected to demonstrate that they have acquired the knowledge and competencies required to meet the Essential Educational Requirements and the learning objectives of a course or program.

Reasonable accommodation: The aim of accommodation is to remove Barriers and ensure Equal Opportunity without changing Essential Educational Requirements. Yorkville will explore accommodation options in good faith and in a timely manner. In each case, Yorkville will implement the most appropriate accommodation, short of undue hardship. Accommodation may take many forms. What works for one person may not work for another. Each person's situation must be individually assessed in the preparation of an Individual Accommodation Plan. Interim Accommodations may be implemented so that immediate supports can be put in place until the student has provided all required documentation and all aspects of a request for accommodation are examined. At no time is the student required to discuss the nature of their medical condition or disability, beyond providing reasonable evidence of a need for accommodation and insight into what form appropriate accommodation may take in the instance. Accommodations may also be retroactive in the case of past events/activities (missed classes, exams, assignments, etc.) where appropriate and determined on a case-by-case basis. An accommodation will be appropriate where it results in Equal

Opportunity, and where the accommodation respects the principles of independence, dignity, individualization, inclusion and integration.

In the process of arranging for reasonable accommodations, sometimes the issue of competing human rights arises. Competing human rights refers to situations where one individual's or group's human rights interfere with those of another individual or group. Such situations may also present themselves in the learning environment. For example, someone's human rights in relation to Gender Identity and/or Gender Expression may appear to be in conflict with someone's Creed/Religion. These situations require a thoughtful analysis into how each side's rights are being affected, and how to resolve the situation in a way that minimally interferes with any set of rights while respecting both sets of rights as much as possible. Consultation with the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Office in such cases is recommended.

Shared Responsibility: Yorkville, students with Disabilities and other needs related to Protected Grounds share the responsibility for ensuring that students receive the Academic Accommodations they need.

Yorkville is responsible for:

- Providing reasonable academic accommodations to students with Disabilities and other needs related to Protected Grounds as per this Policy;
- Reviewing documentation to ensure that recommendations and decisions regarding accommodations are based on appropriate medical documentation (in cases of Disability) as well as educational considerations;
- Ensuring that faculty and staff are knowledgeable about relevant policies and procedures and are familiar with broader issues regarding Equity and inclusion of persons with Disabilities, and those with needs relating to other Protected Grounds including Family Status, Sex and Gender Identity and/or Gender Expression, among others; and
- Treating the information obtained as confidential as required by applicable national and provincial legislation.

A student with Disabilities and/or other needs related to Protected Grounds as per this Policy is responsible for:

- Meeting established admission and assessment requirements and specific course prerequisites;
- Registering (online) with the Academic Accommodations and Accessibility Office to inform the Academic Accommodations and Accessibility Office of the need for accommodations according to the timeline established by Yorkville and providing the details about their accommodation needs as assessed by a licensed medical

professional (in the case of Disability) so the appropriate accommodation can be provided;

- Participating in discussions regarding possible accommodation solutions, cooperating with any experts whose assistance is required, and working with the Academic Accommodations and Accessibility Office on an ongoing basis to manage the accommodation process;
- Providing the necessary information and documentation about the accommodation need to the Accommodations and Accessibility Specialist or designate. (e.g., recent psychoeducational assessment, functional limitations form provided by the Academic Accommodations and Accessibility Office, relevant information about other human rights needs such as family caregiving arrangements, etc.) (Note: Yorkville does not provide or assume the cost of diagnostic services);
- Promptly informing the Academic Accommodations and Accessibility Office of any changes in the accommodation needs promptly to allow for revised accommodations;
- Co-operating with appropriate personnel to determine if current accommodations are working successfully;
- Signing the letter of accommodation which will be presented to course instructors by the Academic Accommodations and Accessibility Office or, to promote self-advocacy, the student may wish to deliver the letter to each instructor;
- Signing and submitting a request for a “Grade of Incomplete” form in advance of due dates if extra time is required beyond the date of a course. This form can be delivered to each instructor by the Academic Accommodations and Accessibility Office or, to promote self-advocacy, the student may wish to deliver the form to each instructor. This form must be submitted in advance of the due date of the assignment(s); and
- Working with the Academic Accommodations and Accessibility Office and/or a Program Advisor to create a plan of study that allows for extra time to complete the requirements of the program.

Undue hardship: Yorkville will be unable to offer Academic Accommodations to students with Disabilities and other needs related to Protected Grounds as per this Policy beyond the point at which the provision of such accommodation(s) would impose an undue hardship on Yorkville or the applicable educational institution. While the determination of undue hardship depends entirely on the circumstances of each specific case, Yorkville might be unable to offer accommodations if:

- The cost to Yorkville is such that making the accommodation would diminish or impair the institution's ability to offer programs or academic services;

- The accommodation would create a substantial risk of personal injury to the student or others;
- The accommodation would impair the ability of other students to pursue their academic activities; or
- The accommodation would require substantial changes to Essential Educational Requirements or components of the course or program or would lower academic standards.

Implementation

Please refer to the Academic Accommodations and Accessibility Procedures document.

Related Information

Academic Accommodations and Accessibility Procedures
Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy
Student Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures
Prevention of Sexual Violence Policy and Procedures
Student Code of Conduct
Accommodations for Religious Observance Policy and Procedures
Gender Inclusion Policy and Procedures

Contacts

The following [individual(s)/office(s)] can address questions regarding this Policy:

Accessibility and Academic Accommodations Office

Email: accessibility@yorkvilleu.ca

Revision Log

V1 November 4, 2021

Policy URL

<https://www.yorkvilleu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Academic-Accommodation-and-Accessibility-Policy-3.pdf>