

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION AND CONSIDERATION

This is the Faculty of Law's policy on academic accommodation and academic consideration. When seeking an adjustment to academic responsibilities, a student can apply through the Accessible Education office of the University's Department of Academic Support & Engagement or through the Faculty of Law. When an adjustment is sought through Accessible Education, it is called a request for academic accommodation. When an adjustment is sought through the Faculty, it is called a request for academic consideration. In general, academic accommodation is for ongoing adjustments to academic responsibilities as a result of a chronic disability, whereas academic consideration is for time-limited adjustments as a result of acute extenuating circumstances. There is, however, some overlap between the two categories. For example, academic consideration may be granted for an acute episode resulting from a chronic disability.

Academic accommodation

A student seeking academic accommodation as a result of a disability, as defined in the University's [Policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#), should register with Accessible Education. Students must follow all procedures and timelines stipulated by Accessible Education and in any applicable university policies. The Faculty will approve an academic accommodation recommended by Accessible Education unless it causes undue hardship or compromises essential requirements of a course or program of study. The Faculty retains discretion over how to implement approved accommodations that are not implemented by Accessible Education.

Academic consideration

The Faculty recognizes that a student's ability to meet academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be compromised by extenuating circumstances, including physical or mental illness, bereavement, or unavoidable personal responsibilities. The Faculty also recognizes that such circumstances can be deeply personal and respects the need for privacy and confidentiality in these matters. However, in order to ensure fairness and consistency for all students, academic consideration will be granted only in those cases where the student establishes that the student is or was seriously affected by extenuating circumstances and, as a result, could not reasonably be expected to meet academic responsibilities.

A student seeking academic consideration for work worth 10% or more of the final grade in a course must submit a request for relief to the Office of the Associate Dean (Academic). A student may be re-directed to Accessible Education if the request relates to a chronic disability.

Any request for academic consideration must specify the details of the consideration being requested and include information explaining 1) when the extenuating circumstances began or will begin to affect the student's academic performance, 2) the ways and extent to which the extenuating circumstances affect or will affect the student's ability to meet academic responsibilities (without unnecessarily disclosing private information), and 3) when the student

should be able to once again meet academic responsibilities. Whenever possible and appropriate, the request must be supported by documentation.

Students are required to act in a timely manner when seeking and arranging academic consideration. Whenever possible, students who seek academic consideration must submit the request for relief and any supporting documentation in advance of the relevant due date(s). Failure to do so can be taken into account in academic consideration decisions.

Once the request and any supporting documents have been received and assessed, appropriate academic consideration will be determined by the Office of the Associate Dean (Academic) in consultation with the student's instructor(s). Academic consideration can include extension of deadlines, waiver of attendance requirements for classes, arranging Special Exams or Incompletes, re-weighting course requirements, or granting late withdrawals without academic penalty. Any consideration given cannot cause undue hardship or compromise the academic integrity of the relevant course or program.

Academic consideration shall be granted only where the evidence indicates that the onset, duration, and severity of the extenuating circumstances are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to meet academic responsibilities as expected. Neither minor ailments/upsets nor stress associated with academic performance in and of itself will usually be a basis for granting consideration. There is no expectation that a student must be in optimum condition to be able to carry out academic responsibilities. When given advance notice of assignment due dates, students are expected to schedule their time to account for the possibility that extenuating circumstances may affect their ability to meet deadlines.

Academic consideration will normally be granted for a specific period of time. A student granted consideration must notify the Office of the Associate Dean (Academic) of any changes to the extenuating circumstances that could affect this time period. The approved academic consideration may be changed as a result. Even in the absence of notification, approved academic consideration may be changed if a student demonstrates an ability to resume responsibilities sooner than anticipated by, for instance, taking on a significant academic or similar commitment.

Academic consideration by instructor for work worth less than 10% of the total grade in a course

A student seeking academic consideration for work worth less than 10% of the total grade in a course must contact the instructor or follow the course-specific instructions provided in the course syllabus.

In arranging academic consideration, instructors will use good judgment and ensure fair treatment for all students. In a course syllabus, an instructor must indicate the process students must follow when seeking academic consideration for work worth less than 10% of the total course grade. Where supporting documentation is required, the documentation must be submitted by the student directly to the Office of the Associate Dean (Academic), who will determine whether academic consideration is warranted. Under the University's Official Student Record Information Privacy

Policy, instructors may not collect medical or other documentation disclosing personal information.

Documentation

When a student requests academic consideration, supporting documentation may consist of a Western University Student Medical Certificate or other documentation, as long as the documentation contains the necessary information and comes from a reliable source. Documentation from a health professional must come from someone in a position to make a reasonable assessment of the student's circumstances during the period for which consideration is sought. All documentation and related communications will be maintained in confidence in accordance with the University's Official Student Record Information Privacy Policy and the University's obligations under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, the *Personal Health Information Privacy Act* and any other applicable laws. Personal information of students will be shared only to the extent necessary to consider requests for academic consideration, to arrange for academic relief, or to process any appeals, all in accordance with this policy and applicable law.

Appeals

A student who has been denied requested academic consideration may appeal the decision to the Dean. The appeal must be submitted within 15 days of the denial. Appeals must be made in writing, identify the reasons why the student disagrees with the academic consideration decision, and include all relevant information and supporting documentation.

Related Policies and Notes:

The Student Medical Certificate (SMC) (approved by Senate in June 2015):
http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

Student Official Record Information Privacy Policy:
http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/general/privacy.pdf

Western University Policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities
https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodation_disabilities.pdf