



No. DSS-01

**Title:** Accessibility Policy for Students

**CLASSIFICATION:**

Director of Student Services

**FIRST ADOPTED:**

October 7, 2025

## **Article 1 Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure equitable rights and access for students with disabilities to the learning activities, internal and external to the curriculum, offered by the College. Dawson College has a responsibility to facilitate universal access and equal opportunities for students with disabilities in all aspects of college life. The policy outlines the respective roles and responsibilities of the Student AccessAbility Centre (SAAC), College employees and students with disabilities with respect to services and academic accommodations.

The aims of this policy are to:

- Ensure equitable rights and access to learning for students with disabilities, as outlined in section 10 of the *Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms*.
- Prevent discrimination of students with disabilities as defined in the *Dawson College Policy to Stem Violence, Discrimination Harassment and Abuse of Power*.
- Clarify the rights and responsibilities of students, employees, and the College regarding services and accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure a shared responsibility of creating a usable, equitable, sustainable, enriched and inclusive learning environment.
- Facilitate collaboration between students with disabilities and the Dawson College community, while acknowledging that inclusion and full participation are the community's social responsibility.
- Ensure that reasonable accommodations are provided to students with disabilities.
- Promote the use of [Universal Design as defined by the United Nations](#)

## Article 2 Regulatory Context Documents

- *Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms*
- *Act to Secure Handicapped persons in The Exercise of Their Rights With a View to Achieving Social, School and Workplace Integration*
- [Quebec Policy: Equals in Every Respect: Because Rights are Meant to be Exercised](#)
- *Canadian Charter of Rights*
- [Canada Disability Benefit Act](#)
- *Dawson College Policy to Stem Violence, Discrimination, Harassment and Abuse of Power*
- *Dawson College Code of Conduct*
- *Dawson College Institutional Student Evaluation Policy*

## Article 3 Definitions

For the purpose of this document:

**Accommodation document:** refers to the notification, prepared by the SAAC Adapted Services Counsellor, outlining the accommodations for which the student is entitled. Its purpose is to communicate the student's academic accommodations to the instructor. In order to respect the student's right to confidentiality, it shall not include a statement of diagnosis.

**Accessibility:** refers to the right that all students, including students with disabilities, have to access physical spaces, services, information and learning.

**Barriers:** refers to anything physical, architectural, technological or attitudinal, anything that is based on information or communications or anything that is the result of a policy or a practice — that hinders the full and equal participation in society of persons with an impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment or a functional limitation. (*Accessible Canada Act*)

**Disability or handicap:** refers to any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment — or a functional limitation — whether permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person's full and equal participation in society. (*Accessible Canada Act*).

**Individualized Educational Plan (IEP):** refers to the educational plan developed by the SAAC Adapted Services Counsellor in conjunction with the student. The IEP, including dates of validity and justifications, is required by the ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur (MES) and indicates the services and

accommodations, the student is eligible to receive based on the assessment of the Adapted Services Counsellor and/or medical documentation and/or a psycho-educational evaluation of their learning needs. The IEP and accommodations listed are only valid once confirmed and signed by the Adapted Services Counsellor and the student.

**Medical documentation:** refers to a written evaluation or report, provided by an appropriate and regulated Quebec professional (doctor, psychologist, speech therapist, optometrist, hearing specialist, guidance counsellor, nurse), that clearly states the student's diagnosis as required by the ministère de l'Enseignement supérieur (MES) and in accordance with le *Code des Professions*. If possible, the resulting functional limitations should also be stated. It is often no longer necessary to seek a clinical reassessment of an already diagnosed condition. However, in some instances a SAAC Adapted Services Counsellor may decide that certain conditions require additional documentation to better define the student's needs.

**Reasonable Accommodations:** refers to an adjustment or a means, determined on an individual student basis, that reduces or removes barriers resulting from the interaction of the functional limitations of the student and the academic environment. Accommodations do not guarantee academic success, nor do they alter the standards and essential elements of a course or program. Accommodations should be reasonable in that they do not cause undue hardship to the institution, or its representatives. The implementation of reasonable accommodations should result in equal opportunity for students to achieve full benefit from the educational environment, without providing unfair advantage. Accommodations may vary from course to course, depending upon course content and format.

**Self-Advocacy:** refers to students with disabilities who act on their own behalf by knowing their strengths and limitations, cognitively or physically, and communicate with college employees and faculty what accommodations, strategies or modifications would best support them.

**Students with disabilities:** refers to any student with a deficiency causing a significant and persistent disability, who is liable to encounter barriers in performing everyday activities.

**The Student AccessAbility Centre (SAAC):** refers to the department within Student Services that has been mandated to evaluate, determine and implement reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. The service is made of a multidisciplinary team, including Adapted Services Counsellors, a Pedagogical Counsellor, Special Education Technicians, Student Attendants, Support Staff and Exam Invigilators.

**Undue Hardship:** refers to an overwhelming obstacle to providing an accommodation. Organizations have a duty to accommodate to the point of undue hardship. Undue hardship is defined as excessive and substantial disruption or interference to the operation of the organization. The organization has the responsibility to prove that it was undue hardship. Examples of undue hardship include health and safety concerns and financial costs.

## **Article 4            Roles and Responsibilities**

While the SAAC is mandated to determine and guide the implementation of reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities, the application of this policy remains the shared responsibility of the Dawson College community as a whole. This includes students, employees, as well as college administrators.

#### **4.1 Responsibilities of Students with Disabilities**

- a) To initiate contact with the SAAC at the beginning of every semester in order to make known their disability and their need for services and accommodations.
- b) To provide appropriate documentation from a regulated Quebec healthcare professional. If no documentation is available, or if the documentation is deemed insufficient to justify the requested services and accommodations, to seek and/or provide additional documentation as requested.
- c) To actively participate in the development and implementation of their IEP.
- d) To self-advocate by speaking to relevant College employees to communicate their strengths and limitations along with their approved accommodations as listed in their accommodation document. If the student is unable to self-advocate, they may request the assistance of their SAAC Adapted Services Counsellor or other representative.
- e) To notify their Adapted Services Counsellor if new information related to their disability becomes available and/or if they are experiencing any academic difficulties or needs that may require a review or modification to their IEP.
- f) To respect the SAAC rules, processes, and procedures, including deadlines, in order to access services and accommodations as described in their IEP. These include, but are not limited to, signing up to write an evaluation in the SAAC exam room, renewing accommodations, requesting text in an accessible format.
- g) To attend training sessions necessary to access and use assistive technology and software as part of their approved accommodations as prescribed by their assigned Adapted Services Counsellor, Pedagogical Counsellor or Special Education Technician.
- h) To use approved classroom and test accommodations for their intended use while respecting the classroom and SAAC test room environments in accordance with the *Dawson Code of Conduct* and *Institutional Student Evaluation Policy (ISEP)*.

#### **4.2 Responsibilities of Student AccessAbility Centre Employees**

- a) To meet with students, with or without documentation, and determine whether they are eligible for reasonable accommodations. The focus should be on the individual student and not on the category of disability. Where the student is facing significant and persistent limitations, the Adapted Services Counsellor in consultation with the student will determine reasonable accommodations and will develop, establish and implement the student's IEP as per the MES guidelines while considering the ministerial requirements of a course or program.
- b) To maintain confidential student records and obtain student consent before discussing their files with other services both internal and external to the College or their family member, except when authorized by law. When releasing information as required to the Dawson Registrar, the CCSI

(Centres collégiaux de soutien à l'intégration) and the MES, they will do so in accordance with the *Act respecting access to documents held by public bodies and the protection of personal information*. In all instances, a student's right to confidentiality, autonomy and dignity will be respected.

- c) To prepare written communication to faculty instructors, outlining the approved accommodations for which a student is eligible, and to support both faculty and students with their implementation. Where labs, clinicals, practicals, and stages are concerned, collaborate with program coordinators or representatives to establish appropriate accommodations.
- d) To ensure students have access to appropriate resources including but not limited to training on assistive technology, assistive software and tools, material in alternative format, interpretative services, special education technicians and student attendants for personal or academic support. Where further support is needed, refer students to the appropriate services within the College, and externally, as needed.
- e) To inform students on rules, processes, and procedures in order to access services and accommodations as described in their IEP. These include but are not limited to renewing accommodations, confirming their IEP, signing up to write an evaluation in the SAAC exam room, requesting text in an accessible format.
- f) To ensure access to approved accommodations for evaluations as described in the IEP and to maintain exam protocol and integrity, in accordance with faculty parameters specific to the exam as well as with ISEP.
- g) To advocate for students and promote an inclusive college and learning environment by actively bringing awareness to disability issues.

#### **4.3 Responsibilities of Faculty**

- a) To respect the accommodations that are prescribed by the Adapted Services Counsellor based on the documentation or information provided by the student.
- b) To foster a receptive and supportive learning environment for students with disabilities and to respect student confidentiality related to their needs of services.
- c) To facilitate or assist, when needed or requested by the student, with the implementation of accommodations as listed in their accommodation document.
- d) To communicate and collaborate with the student's SAAC Adapted Services Counsellor if there are any concerns or clarifications needed regarding the implementation of a service or accommodation. To respond to student self-advocacy and respect the student's right to choose when to apply their accommodations as listed in their accommodation document.
- e) To collaborate with the SAAC exam staff by providing test copies and parameters in advance, 48 hours prior, to ensure exam adaptation, preparation, and review of instructions to respect accommodations and maintain exam integrity.

- f) To retrieve student exam copies from the SAAC office so that the corrected version may be returned to students ideally at the same time as their classmates.
- g) To collaborate with the SAAC team in the event that alternate format of course material is necessary and must be adapted.

#### **4.5 Responsibilities of Facilities Management:**

- a) To inform the SAAC of any classroom relocation that may have a direct impact on students with disabilities.
- b) To inform the SAAC of any obstacles or repairs to equipment that may affect access or use to students with disabilities (elevators, door closures, ramp access, washrooms, etc.).
- c) To consult with the SAAC at the planning stages of renovations to ensure that the inclusion of students with disabilities is integrated.
- d) To facilitate minor installations and/or adaptations to classroom and surrounding environments.

#### **4.6 Responsibilities of Academic Systems:**

- a) To facilitate classroom changes when necessary to accommodate students with disabilities.
- b) To inform the SAAC of any changes or updates made to the timetable throughout the course of the semester such as classroom locations or teacher reassignment, both temporary or for the remainder of the semester.
- c) To inform all newly-admitted students at the time of their acceptance to Dawson College about services available to students with disabilities.

### **Article 5 Process**

Students who have concerns with their proposed IEP as approved, should first speak with their SAAC Adapted Services Counsellor. If the matter cannot be resolved, the student should contact the Associate Director of Student Services or their respective Sector Dean.

Students who feel their accommodations are not being respected or feel they have been discriminated against, should first speak with their SAAC Adapted Services Counsellor, who will attempt to resolve the situation. Should a resolution not be possible, the Adapted Services Counsellor will request that the Associate Director of Student Services intervene. The Associate Director of Student Services will communicate the issue to the appropriate Sector Dean or supervisor, when appropriate. If no resolution is possible, the College may seek a legal opinion.

Where a Faculty member has a concern regarding an academic accommodation and the SAAC Adapted Services Counsellor has been unsuccessful in achieving a resolution, the matter should be referred to the

appropriate Sector Dean. The Sector Dean will communicate the issue to the Associate Director of Student Services, when appropriate. If no resolution is possible, the College may seek a legal opinion.

#### **Article 7            Policy Application and Review**

The responsibility for the application of this Policy falls under the Director of Student Services.