

ACCOMMODATION INFORMATION FOR CLINICAL AND INTENSIVE PROGRAMS

Background

We recognize that clinical settings often depart markedly from the classroom environment and as such, the necessary accommodations may differ from those you have in place for classroom learning. If you are a student with a disability, we need to explore whether any accommodations are necessary in the setting of your clinical program. We urge you to discuss your accommodation needs as soon as possible, and for those of you in programs where you will shortly be matched with a particular organization/firm, to do so prior to the match being made. Our goal is to facilitate a collaborative effort to pre-plan accommodation needs and strategies with attention to the unique context of the specific placement.

Our past experience strongly suggests that there is an increased likelihood of success in clinical programs when students with disabilities disclose their need for accommodation at the earliest possible stage. To initiate this process, you may wish to contact any of the director of the program in which you are enrolled, Nancy Sperling in the Student Services Office, or your accessibility counsellor at York's Student Accessibility Services (SAS). If you have not already registered with SAS, this will be a necessary first step. (Note, however, that SAS is unable to communicate with Osgoode unless you give your consent.)

It will be your decision as to whether to bring others into the planning discussion. However, in some instances effective planning will point to the importance of including a person with detailed knowledge of the workplace where you will be undertaking your clinical placement. And indeed, in some instances it will only be possible to implement the accommodation with the involvement and agreement of the host organization.

Information and Equipment

At every stage information will be shared only on an "as needed" basis. In no instance will this require the sharing of a medical diagnosis or assessment. Consistent with SAS policy and practices, this precludes program directors and clinical instructors from requesting further personal information from you or from SAS (e.g. medical/psychological documentation).

We also appreciate that the need for a disability accommodation may arise during the clinical placement itself, and that the nature of the accommodations needed may change over time. In these circumstances, again we urge you to be in touch with SAS as soon as possible. In instances involving an immediate and short-term need for accommodations that might arise during the placement (for example, a broken arm) registration with SAS may not be necessary.

Where an accommodation requires the purchase of adaptive equipment or technology, students will be required to make reasonable efforts to apply for bursaries for which they may be eligible. In the event that no other source of funding is available, it will be the responsibility of Osgoode Hall Law School to work together with the placement organization to ensure that the equipment or technology necessary to ensure reasonable accommodations is in place. For further clarification, in cases where additional expenses are required, the costs will (i) be born by Osgoode; except (ii) in those cases where purchases will provide ongoing benefits to the placement organization, the costs will be shared proportionately between Osgoode and the organization (as an example, where purchase of equipment is required that has a lifespan beyond the immediate need of the current student and which is likely to be used in the future).

Resolving Problems

In the unlikely event that no agreement can be reached between you, Osgoode Hall Law School, and the placement organization regarding the reasonable accommodations to be provided, the Associate Dean (Students) shall be consulted. Where disagreement remains unresolved after consultation with the Associate Dean (Students), a meditative process will be implemented by the Dean. In the event that reasonable accommodations cannot be implemented at the placement organization, the Law School – in consultation with you – will make its best efforts to locate a suitable alternative placement.

Summary

The following is a quick summary of what you can do to facilitate accommodation in an intensive or clinical program:

1. You are encouraged to identify any accommodation needs as early as possible and proactively work with your placement to develop an accommodation plan.
2. If accommodations are likely required, you are encouraged to arrange to spend some time at the placement observing the workflow and processes. This can be arranged through the Director, and without any need to disclose any disability or accommodation need.
3. A formal application for accommodation can be made to the Director of the program in which you are enrolled, Nancy Sperling in the Office of Student Services, or an accessibility counsellor at SAS. This should be made as soon as possible following the confirmation of a placement in the program, or when the program commences, or when the need for accommodation arises at any point in the term, whichever is appropriate and relevant.
4. The application for accommodation should preferably be made in writing, by letter or email to the person noted above in #3:
 - advising of the nature of the disability (this does not require the sharing of a medical diagnosis or assessment, and confidentiality is assured);
 - making the needs for accommodation known, to the best of your ability, so that the placement can understand the requested accommodation; and
 - providing contact information for discussing arrangements with the placement.
5. In the course of arrangements for accommodation, it is recognized that you are the best source of information about your individual disability, and it is suggested that you should meet with the placement organization before the commencement of the academic term to answer questions or provide information regarding relevant restrictions or limitations and participate in discussions regarding possible accommodation solutions.
6. At any point during the term of the placement, you may request to meet with the person referred to in #3 above to review the accommodation plan, and/or adapt it to changing needs or requirements.