



# *The Disability Services Framework*

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**Guidelines for the Accommodation of Students with Disabilities  
Attending Post-Secondary Education in British Columbia**

*British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education  
June 2011*

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## BACKGROUND TO THE DISABILITY SERVICES FRAMEWORK

Many of the guidelines outlined in this document are responses to recommendations emerging from the *Adult Special Education and Services Grant Review Report* written by Jack Newberry in May 2000. The report included a number of suggestions, including recommendations that a:

- Clear set of definitions for services for students with disabilities be developed and that they be applied consistently across the institutions and in the Ministry of Advanced Education (AVED);
- Province wide policy framework for delivery of services to students with disabilities be developed;
- Resource manual be developed which would incorporate the policy framework and would specifically address human rights matters, services expectations and a uniform set of definitions.

The Disability Services Working Group (DSWG) was formed in order to develop provincial guidelines for reasonable accommodation and services for students with disabilities, as well as streamlined reporting requirements for submitting information to AVED. DSWG met in May, 2001 and February, 2002.

The definitions found in the *Disability Definitions and Accommodation Matrix* (Disability Matrix) reflect broadly accepted ideas that have been articulated nationally and internationally. However, it should be noted that the:

- Disability Matrix is designed as a general **guideline** for how students with disabilities may be accommodated
- Information included in the Disability Matrix is not definitive and is intended as a foundation upon which service providers at individual institutions can build at their discretion
- The needs of students with disabilities should ultimately be assessed on an individual basis.

Institutions are encouraged to maintain dialogue through their Articulation Committee representatives and AVED regarding disability services issues and revisions to this document. Annually, the Articulation Committee reviews and updates the content of the Disability Framework and Matrix .

Information on programs for students with disabilities can be accessed on AVED's website at

<http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/studentaidbc/specialprograms/permanentdisabilities.htm>

## LEGISLATION and AGREEMENTS

The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of the legislative documents that inform disability policies at all levels. It is in this context that the Ministry and post-secondary system representatives developed the voluntary **Disability Services Framework** for British Columbia's post-secondary institutions.

Federal	
<p><i>Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms</i></p>	<p><i>Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability. (15.1)</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>Subsection (1) does not preclude any law, program or activity that has as its object the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups including those that are disadvantaged because of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability. (15.2)</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.efc.ca/pages/law/charter/charter.text.html">http://www.efc.ca/pages/law/charter/charter.text.html</a></p>
<p><i>Canadian Human Rights Act</i></p>	<p><i>All individuals should have an opportunity equal with other individuals to make for themselves the lives that they are able and wish to have and to have their needs accommodated, consistent with their duties and obligations as members of society, without being hindered in or prevented from doing so by discriminatory practices based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, disability or conviction for an offence for which a pardon has been granted. (2)</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>For a request for accommodation to be considered unreasonable... it must be established that accommodation of the needs of an individual or a class of individuals affected would impose undue hardship on the person who would have to accommodate those needs, considering health, safety and cost. (15.2)</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>A person who proposes to implement a plan for adapting any services, facilities, premises, equipment or operations to meet the needs of persons arising from a disability may apply to the Canadian Human Rights Commission for approval of the plan. (17.1)</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.efc.ca/pages/law/canada/canada.H-6.head.html">http://www.efc.ca/pages/law/canada/canada.H-6.head.html</a></p>

<b>Provincial</b>	
<p><i>British Columbia Human Rights Code</i></p>	<p><i>The purposes of this Code are as follows:</i></p> <p>a) <i>to foster a society in British Columbia in which there are no impediments to full and free participation in the economic, social, political and cultural life of British Columbia;</i></p> <p>b) <i>to promote a climate of understanding and mutual respect where all are equal in dignity and rights. (3)</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>A person must not, without a bona fide and reasonable justification,</i></p> <p>a) <i>Deny to a person or class of persons any accommodation, service or facility customarily available to the public, or</i></p> <p>b) <i>Discriminate against a person or class of persons regarding any accommodation, service or facility customarily available to the public</i></p> <p><i>Because of race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex or sexual orientation of that person or class of persons. (8.1)</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.bclaws.ca/EPLibraries/bclaws_new/document/ID/freeside/00_96210_01">http://www.bclaws.ca/EPLibraries/bclaws_new/document/ID/freeside/00_96210_01</a></p>
<p><i>The Workers Compensation Board of BC's Occupational Health and Safety Regulation</i></p>	<p><i>A worker must not be assigned to activities where a reported or observed impairment may create an undue risk to the worker or anyone else. (1.4.19)</i></p> <p><a href="http://regulation.healthandsafetycentre.org/s/Part4.asp">http://regulation.healthandsafetycentre.org/s/Part4.asp</a></p>
<p><i>The British Columbia Building Code</i></p>	<p><i>It is the intent of Clause 3.8.2.17(1)(a) to have the buildings (including portables) of a school or college accessible. Where a complex has several buildings with parking areas, parking stalls should be designated to accommodate students or staff with disabilities at any or all buildings. In addition, parking stalls to accommodate visitors with disabilities should be considered.</i></p> <p>The complete British Columbia Building Code is not available online at this time.</p> <p><i>The British Columbia Building Access Handbook is based on the British Columbia Building Code of 1998. The document specifies a wide range of access regulations for new and pre-existing structures with regards to accommodation of persons with disabilities. The document is published by:</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Crown Publications</b>  521 Fort Street  Victoria, BC  V8W 1E7  (250) 386-4636  fax: (250) 386-0221</p> <p><a href="http://www.bccodes.ca/bccode_building.htm">http://www.bccodes.ca/bccode_building.htm</a></p>

<p><i>BC Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act</i></p>	<p><i>The head of a public body must refuse to disclose personal information to an applicant if the disclosure would be an unreasonable invasion of a third party's personal privacy. (22 (1))</i></p> <p><i>If a public body uses an individual's personal information to make a decision that directly affects the individual, the public body must retain that information for at least one year after using it so that the individual has a reasonable opportunity to obtain access to it. (31)</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.bclaws.ca/EPLibraries/bclaws_new/document/ID/freeside/96165_00">http://www.bclaws.ca/EPLibraries/bclaws_new/document/ID/freeside/96165_00</a></p>
<p><i>Workforce Development for People with Disabilities</i></p>	<p>The WFD-PD Program (formerly known as Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities (EAPD) provides funding to assist adults with disabilities to prepare for, secure and maintain employment. Program support is cost shared under the Federal-Provincial Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities.</p> <p><a href="http://www.aeei.gov.sk.ca/wfd-pd">http://www.aeei.gov.sk.ca/wfd-pd</a></p>

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Ministry**

AVED recognizes that providing services to students with disabilities is a responsibility shared between the Provincial Government and universities, university colleges, colleges, and institutes.

The Ministry provides funding to institutions to assist with meeting access requirements. To meet the Federal Government's reporting requirements for services to persons with disabilities, the Ministry requests an annual report on actual expenditures for these services.

Employability Program for Persons with Disabilities program (EPPD), is a major source of funding for services for persons with disabilities in the province, and has developed an accountability framework. The document includes federal-provincial joint planning and information sharing, results reporting, and on-going evaluation activities. Reporting focuses on changes in the employment and employability status of participants in programs funded under EPPD.

### **Institutions**

The Ministry is aware that post-secondary institutions throughout the province have a wide variety of institution-specific policies related to students with disabilities. This document is not intended to replace or override these, but to enhance individual institutional policy.

Many institutional policies have been developed to reflect common issues and themes emerging from the accommodation of students with disabilities in the post-secondary education system. A list of common institutional policies and suggested institutional responsibilities is provided below. Institutions typically have policies:

- addressing attitudinal barriers by expressing the institution's commitment to taking all reasonable action to make the educational environment free of discrimination for students with disabilities;
- stating that the institution will take all reasonable measures to remove physical barriers for students with disabilities and provide an equal educational opportunity;
- stating that accommodation must not dilute curriculum or credentials, but will give the student an opportunity to demonstrate their skills and knowledge;
- defining a standard of acceptable documentation of a disability, such as information regarding the qualifications necessary for a professional to make a definitive medical diagnosis, and policies to ensure that documentation is recent, typically 3-5 years.
- stating the necessity for clear communication of all relevant policy and service information; and
- requiring that disability information be treated as confidential according to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (BC)

## **Student**

Each institution approaches student roles differently, and the list below represents a synthesis of some institutional policies. These state that the student with a disability has an ongoing responsibility to:

- bring the request for accommodations or changes in accommodation needs to the attention of appropriate personnel in a timely manner in order to allow for reasonable arrangement of accommodations;
- present appropriate documentation to the institution prior to service delivery;
- bring documentation from certified and/or licensed professionals who have specific training, expertise and experience in the diagnosis of conditions for which accommodation is being requested;
- meet all pre-admission and academic standards;
- abide by the policies and procedures of the institutions that they attend.

## **DISABILITY DEFINITIONS AND ACCOMMODATIONS**

A matrix outlining the disability, diagnosis, formal and functional definitions, qualifying professional, accommodations, and additional information and resources is available in [Appendix A](#) of this document. In utilizing this matrix, it is important to keep in mind the set of guiding principles for the provision of services for persons with disabilities:

1. Documentation of disability must include a formal diagnosis.
2. For statistical purposes, students should be counted in the category for which they are being accommodated.
3. In determining reasonable accommodations, each student situation must be reviewed on an individual, case-by-case basis. Qualified disability service providers determine necessary accommodations through extensive analysis of medical documentation, nature and extent of the disability, functional impact of the disability on the physical or learning environment, essential course or program outcomes, and a range of accommodations required to mitigate the effects of the disability.

## **SYSTEM RESOURCES/AGENCIES**

There are a variety of program resources available for students with disabilities and the institutions they attend, and many of these programs work in collaboration with AVED. Information about the purpose of these programs and how to access their services is briefly listed below.

### **Assistive Technology British Columbia (ATBC) – Program for Institutional Loans of Adaptive Technology (PILAT)**

The ATBC is a Government initiative to provide adaptive equipment for on-site use to support post-secondary students or employees who have a disability. The aim is to reduce barriers in reaching educational and vocational goals. The program houses a loan bank of adaptive technology that eligible students and employees can access through referring agents (disability



service coordinators, or EPPD. Support services for adaptive equipment include consultation, in-service and training.

AVED established a Program for Institutional Loans of Adaptive Technology (PILAT) as part of ATBC. This program was established to address a need for the provision of adaptive equipment for on-site use as well as to formalize the parameters for the loan of adaptive software. The loan bank is intended to assist institutions in meeting the needs of students with disabilities by providing short-term loans of adaptive hardware/software to institutions in a cost efficient and convenient manner.

LINK- <http://www.at-bc.ca>

PHONE – 604-264-8295

### **College and Institute Library Services (CILS)**

CILS is a library service for students and instructors with (remove - special needs) disabilities at publicly funded colleges and institutes in BC. Clients are (remove – people) students who cannot use conventional print because of visual, learning or physical impairments. CILS provides learning materials in formats suitable to the needs of instructors and students in adult basic education, college, institute, apprenticeship and university college programs. CILS supplies research materials, required texts and reference services upon request.

LINK – <http://www.langara.bc.ca/cils>

PHONE – 604-323-5237

### **Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC)**

HRSDC is responsible for the Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities and the Employability Program for Persons with Disabilities program (EPPD).

The Opportunities Fund is designed to:

- Assist persons with disabilities in preparing for, obtaining, and keeping employment or becoming self-employed;
- Support an array of activities such as, but not limited to, the following: encouraging employers to hire workers with disabilities, increasing the employment skills of persons with disabilities, providing work experience, and assisting individuals with starting their own business; and
- Work in partnership with organizations for persons with disabilities, including the private sector, to support innovative approaches to integrate individuals with disabilities into employment or self-employment and address barriers to an individual's labour market participation.

The EPPD program provides funds to provinces who design and deliver programming consistent with five-year bilateral agreements. EPPD is meant to enhance participation of working age adults with disabilities in the labour force by helping them prepare for, attain and retain employment.

LINK – [http://www.rhdcc-hrsc.gc.ca/eng/disability\\_issues/index.shtml](http://www.rhdcc-hrsc.gc.ca/eng/disability_issues/index.shtml)

## **Post-Secondary Communication Access Services (PCAS)**

Contact Person(s): Shirley Coomber, Coordinator Rhys McCormick, Access Advisor

Address: British Columbia Institute of Technology  
3700 Willingdon Ave., Burnaby, BC V5G 3H2 6G2

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Website: <http://www.bcit.ca/drc/pcas/>

Post-Secondary Communication Access Services' (PCAS) is funded by the Ministry of Advanced Education and housed at the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT). The program's mandate is to promote public post-secondary education that is accessible for students who are deaf, hard of hearing or deaf-blind and attending, or planning to attend college or university in British Columbia (BC).

Supports are provided to disability coordinators, administrators, staff, and service providers working in post-secondary institutions across BC. The program also offers resources for students who want to explore service options in post-secondary. PCAS offers:

- Consultation related to accommodation planning
- Resources on hearing loss and disability access
- Provincial Guidelines and Pay Scales for interpreting and transcribing
- Job descriptions for service providers
- Services such as the Post-Secondary Interpreting Screen and Employment Registry (Jobsline)
- Workshops on legal access, accommodation planning, managing human resource issues, skill building for interpreters and transcribers, and strategies that promote classroom access.

## **Student Aid BC**

Student Aid BC is responsible for financial assistance to students under the British Columbia Student Assistance Program (BCSAP). The Assistance Program for Students with Disabilities (APSD), Canada Study Grant (CSG), and Canada Access Grant (CAG) are administered by Student Aid BC.

## **Assistance Program for Students with Disabilities (APSD)**

The APSD program is a provincially funded, financial needs tested program for students with permanent disabilities attending public post-secondary schools.

Grants of up to \$10,000 (\$12,000 for students requiring attendant care while at school) are available to students for exceptional education-related services and adaptive equipment. The grant does not cover living expenses, tuition or books.

Applications can be obtained through the DSS office or Financial Award office at the institution.

[http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/studentaidbc/specialprograms/assistanceprogram\\_permanentdisabilities.htm](http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/studentaidbc/specialprograms/assistanceprogram_permanentdisabilities.htm)

### **Canada Student Grant for Services and Equipment for Persons with Permanent Disabilities (CSGP-SEPD)**

The CSGP-SEPD is a program for students with permanent disabilities and is designed to help students overcome educational barriers that they may have due to their permanent disability. Students may be eligible to receive non-repayable grant funding (for up to \$8,000 per program year) from the Federal Government to purchase adaptive equipment and support services to help access public or private post-secondary institutions. The funding can also be used to cover 75% of the cost of a Learning Disability Assessment – up to \$1,200 (if the assessment meets Ministry criteria). Students who are deemed learning disabled on the assessment are reimbursed. Rules for the use of this funding are listed on the web page provided below.

<http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/studentaidbc/specialprograms/permanentdisabilities.htm>

### **Canada Student Grant for Persons with Permanent Disabilities (CSGP-PD)**

The CSG-PD program is available to high needs students who have a documented permanent disability that results in a barrier to education. Students can receive up to \$2000 per year. For more information:

<http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/studentaidbc/specialprograms/permanentdisabilities.htm>

### **Learning Disability Assessment Bursary (LDAB)**

The LDAB was established to assist students with the up-front costs of the learning disabilities assessment. If you have a learning disability, you require a recent learning disability assessment to determine eligibility for services and/or equipment through the Canada Student Grant for Services and Equipment for Persons with Permanent Disabilities program (CSGP-SEPD). This grant program is available if you are studying part-time or full-time and attending a British Columbia public post-secondary institution taking post-secondary level courses. A bursary of up to \$1,800 will be made available to eligible applicants. For more information:

[http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/studentaidbc/specialprograms/learning\\_disability\\_bursary.htm](http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/studentaidbc/specialprograms/learning_disability_bursary.htm)

### **BC Access Grant for Full-Time Students with a Permanent Disability (BCAG-PD)**

This grant is available to students with a permanent disability in full-time attendance (>40% course load) at a public post-secondary school. It consists of a non-repayable grant to replace up to \$1,000 in B.C. student loan funding. Once you have applied and are eligible to receive full-time StudentAid BC funding you automatically qualify for the B.C. Access Grant if you have demonstrated financial need and previously submitted verification of your permanent disability to StudentAid BC. For more information:

<http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/studentaidbc/specialprograms/bcaccessgrant.htm>

## **Supplemental Bursary for Students with Disabilities**

This is a provincial bursary program designed to assist students with disabilities with exceptional educational costs (e.g., additional transportation costs, specialized clothing, etc), recognizing that on average, students with permanent disabilities incur higher costs to attend post-secondary studies in comparison to the general student population. This bursary program is available to part-time students or full-time students with permanent disabilities attending designated B.C. post-secondary institutions, and taking post-secondary level course(s). You do not need to apply separately for this new funding. If you have provided the necessary medical documentation to qualify for the existing financial aid programs for students with disabilities, you will automatically receive this bursary. For more information:

[http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/studentaidbc/specialprograms/bursary\\_disabilities.htm](http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/studentaidbc/specialprograms/bursary_disabilities.htm)

## **BC Access Grant for Deaf Students (BCAG-DS) – Pilot Program**

This is a grant that facilitates attendance for Deaf students at specialized American post-secondary institutions where the curriculum is delivered in American Sign Language. To be eligible for this program a student must be enrolled in a full time program, be able to verify hearing loss as a permanent disability, and demonstrate financial need through the Student Financial Assistance process. This program was initiated in the summer of 2010 and will be evaluated at the end of the 2010/2011 program year. For more information:

[http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/studentaidbc/specialprograms/bcaccessgrant\\_deafstudents.htm](http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/studentaidbc/specialprograms/bcaccessgrant_deafstudents.htm)

## **Employment Programs for Persons with Disabilities (EPPD)**

EPPD helps remove barriers to training and employment for British Columbians with permanent disabilities. Services are offered through community-based service providers.

Through this network, EPPD and its community-based service providers help people gain employment (minimum wage or better) by:

- Working with post-secondary and other educational institutions;
- Working with employers;
- Providing access to needed supports for education and training leading to employment.

By focusing on ability, EPPD helps people with disabilities gain employment, greater independence, and, ultimately, a better quality of life.

[www.eia.gov.bc.ca/pwd/eppd.htm](http://www.eia.gov.bc.ca/pwd/eppd.htm)