
Policy on Student Disability Academic Accommodation

Fairleigh Dickinson University, Vancouver Campus

Responsible Office	Student Services	Policy Number	
Responsible Official	Manager of Student Services	Effective Date	September 2026
Last Revision	June 2026	Next Review	June 2027
Reviewed By	Damien Holland, Executive Director of Operations	Status	

I. Purpose

FDU Vancouver (FDUV) is committed to providing equitable access to academic programs, services, and learning environments for all students, promoting human rights, equity, and diversity. The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedures and responsibilities related to academic accommodation, creating an accessible environment that enables students to meet essential course requirements.

Academic accommodations are provided to remove barriers and promote equal access to education while maintaining the academic standards and learning outcomes of all programs. Receiving accommodations is a right, not a privilege, and students who receive accommodations must not be treated differently from any other student.

II. Legal Authority

This policy is guided exclusively by applicable Canadian federal and British Columbia provincial legislation, including:

- Human Rights Code, RSBC 1996, c 210 (BC Human Rights Code) — the primary legislation prohibiting discrimination based on physical or mental disability in the provision of education and services in British Columbia. This is the foundational legal basis for this policy.
- Accessible British Columbia Act, SBC 2021, c 19 (Accessible BC Act) — requires post-secondary institutions to establish an accessibility committee, develop an accessibility plan, and provide a public feedback mechanism to identify and remove barriers for persons with disabilities. Compliance was required as of September 1, 2023.
- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, RSBC 1996, c 165 (FIPPA) — governs the collection, use, and disclosure of personal information, including disability documentation held by post-secondary institutions.
- Personal Information Protection Act, SBC 2003, c 63 (PIPA) — applies to the collection, use, and disclosure of personal information by organizations in BC.

III. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All students enrolled at the Vancouver Campus requesting disability-related academic accommodation, including both permanent and temporary disabilities
- Prospective students who have formally applied to the university and require accommodation in the admissions process
- Faculty members responsible for implementing accommodations in their courses
- Staff involved in providing disability support services

DUTY TO INQUIRE:

While students are generally responsible for self-identifying and requesting accommodation, FDU Vancouver may have a duty to inquire when a student appears to be struggling academically due to a possible disability — even if they have not formally requested accommodation. If faculty or staff observe indicators that suggest a disability may be affecting a student's academic performance, they should contact the Manager of Student Services for guidance.

IV. Definitions

Term	Definition
Disability	Under the Accessible British Columbia Act (2021), disability means an inability to participate fully and equally in society as a result of the interaction of an impairment and a barrier. Impairment includes physical, sensory, mental, intellectual or cognitive impairment, whether permanent, temporary or episodic.
Barrier	Anything that hinders the full and equal participation in society of a person with an impairment, including environments, attitudes, practices, policies, information, communications or technologies.
Academic Accommodation	An adjustment to academic procedures, course delivery, or assessment methods to ensure equal educational access without altering course requirements or essential learning outcomes.
Temporary Disability	A short-term condition — such as an injury, surgery, or acute medical issue — that temporarily limits a student's ability to complete academic tasks. Subject to periodic review.
Mental Health Disability	A mental health condition that substantially limits one or more major life activities, including but not limited to anxiety disorders, depression, PTSD, ADHD, bipolar disorder, and psychotic disorders. Mental health disabilities are recognized equally under this policy and the BC Human Rights Code.
Disability Documentation	Professional documentation verifying the presence of a disability and describing functional limitations affecting academic performance.
Accommodation Letter	A formal letter prepared by the Manager of Student Services confirming approved accommodations for instructors. Does not disclose the nature of the student's disability.
Manager of Student Services	The staff member responsible for reviewing documentation, assessing requests, determining eligibility, and coordinating disability accommodations at FDU Vancouver.

Accommodation Committee	A designated university body responsible for reviewing complex accommodation requests, advising on policy adjustments, and adjudicating student appeals.
Accessibility Committee	The institutional committee established under the Accessible British Columbia Act (2021) responsible for identifying and removing systemic barriers and advising on the institution's Accessibility Plan.
Bona Fide Academic Requirements (BFARs)	Essential learning outcomes, competencies, or program requirements that cannot be waived or altered without fundamentally changing the nature of the academic program.
Undue Hardship	The threshold at which the university's duty to accommodate is discharged. Factors include financial cost, health and safety implications, and operational impact. This threshold is high under the BC Human Rights Code.

V. Policy Statement

FDUV, through the Manager of Student Services, is committed to:

- Providing reasonable academic accommodations to students who submit current documentation from a qualified professional verifying a disability
- Ensuring accommodation decisions are made consistently, fairly, and within a reasonable timeframe — typically 5 to 10 business days from receipt of complete documentation
- Protecting the dignity, privacy, and autonomy of all students requesting accommodation
- Accommodating students to the point of undue hardship as required under the BC Human Rights Code
- Proactively identifying and removing systemic barriers in compliance with the Accessible British Columbia Act (2021)
- Recognizing sign languages as primary languages for communication by deaf persons in accordance with the Accessible BC Act

VI. Accessible British Columbia Act (2021) — Compliance Requirements

As a post-secondary institution in British Columbia, FDU Vancouver is subject to the Accessible British Columbia Act, SBC 2021, c 19. Compliance with the following requirements was required as of September 1, 2023:

Requirement	Description	Status
Accessibility Committee	FDU Vancouver must establish an Accessibility Committee with at least 50% of members being persons with disabilities or representatives of disability-serving organizations. At least one member must be an Indigenous person. The committee reflects the diversity of persons in BC.	Required
Accessibility Plan	FDU Vancouver must develop, publish, and update every three years a written plan to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for individuals in or interacting with the institution. The plan must be developed in consultation with the Accessibility Committee.	Required
Public Feedback Mechanism	FDU Vancouver must establish and maintain a process for receiving public feedback on the Accessibility Plan and barriers experienced by individuals. Feedback must be considered in updating the plan.	Required
Digital Accessibility	All digital environments, communications, websites, and online content must be accessible to persons with disabilities.	Required

NON-COMPLIANCE PENALTIES:

Under the Accessible BC Act, failure to establish an accessibility committee, maintain an accessibility plan, or provide a public feedback mechanism can result in fines of up to \$250,000. FDU Vancouver must ensure these three requirements are in place and actively maintained.

VII. Confidentiality and Privacy

Information about a student's disability is strictly confidential and governed by FIPPA and PIPA. This information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.

Faculty and staff must:

- Protect student privacy at all times
- Discuss disability-related information only with authorized personnel or the student directly
- Not ask students about the nature of their diagnosis or request disability documentation directly
- Avoid classroom practices that may inadvertently disclose a student's disability to peers

Disability documentation is stored securely by the Manager of Student Services and does not appear on academic transcripts or student records.

FAMILY MEMBERS & THIRD PARTIES:

If the student is not a minor (under 18), FDU Vancouver is NOT authorized to share any information about a student's disability, accommodation, or academic situation with family members or third parties without the student's written consent. Students wishing to authorize information sharing must complete a Release of Information Form available at: fdu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/Release-of-Information-Form-Fillable.pdf

VIII. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Manager of Student Services	• Serve as the primary point of contact and assess all initial accommodation requests • Review disability documentation and determine eligibility within 5–10 business days • Conduct student consultations to determine appropriate accommodations • Prepare and issue Accommodation Letters to instructors without disclosing the nature of the disability • Coordinate adapted testing and support services • Maintain confidential and secure student accommodation files

	• Serve as a standing member of the Accessibility Committee
Students	• Self-identify and request accommodation in a timely manner — ideally at the beginning of each semester • Complete the Disability Disclosure Form and submit with required documentation to the Manager of Student Services • Collect and deliver Accommodation Letters to instructors within the first two weeks of the semester • Monitor academic progress and communicate any issues to Student Services • Cooperate reasonably with the accommodation process and accept reasonable accommodation options
Instructors & Faculty	• Implement approved accommodations as outlined in Accommodation Letters • Not ask students about the nature of their disability or request documentation directly • Deliver exam materials to the designated testing location at least one business day prior to the exam • Maintain strict confidentiality regarding student disabilities at all times • Contact the Manager of Student Services with any concerns about accommodation implementation
Accommodation Committee	• Provide guidance on complex, unprecedented, or extensive accommodation requests referred by the Manager of Student Services • Review and adjudicate student appeals regarding denied or modified accommodations • Proactively identify and recommend removal of systemic accessibility barriers • Fulfill Accessibility Committee functions under the Accessible BC Act (2021) — develop Accessibility Plan, receive public feedback, and report to senior leadership annually The Accommodation Committee does not currently include a member who has self-identified as having a disability. Disclosure of disability status is voluntary and protected under privacy legislation. To ensure fairness and expertise, the committee relies on training, external consultation, and established

	accommodation procedures consistent with the BC Human Rights Code and institutional policy.
Executive Director of Operations	• Provide institutional oversight and final authority on escalated appeals • Ensure institutional compliance with the BC Human Rights Code and Accessible BC Act

IX. Documentation Requirements

Students requesting academic accommodation must provide documentation from a qualified professional.

Accepted professionals include:

- Physician or medical doctor
- Registered psychologist or psychiatrist — including for mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression, PTSD, ADHD, and bipolar disorder
- Learning specialist or educational diagnostician
- Audiologist or ophthalmologist (for sensory disabilities)
- Nurse practitioner (for certain conditions)

Documentation must:

- Be current — within the past three years for most conditions
- Reflect the student's current level of functioning
- Clearly identify the diagnosis and describe functional limitations affecting academic participation
- Be written on official letterhead and signed by the qualified professional

For temporary disabilities, a physician's note or medical certificate describing the condition and expected duration is sufficient.

All documentation is reviewed exclusively by the Manager of Student Services and maintained in a secure, confidential file. Processing time is typically 5–10 business days from receipt of complete documentation.

X. Academic Accommodation Process

Students are encouraged to request accommodation before the beginning of the semester whenever possible. Accommodations cannot be applied retroactively.

1	Submit Documentation Student completes the Disability Disclosure Form and submits it with supporting documentation to the Manager of Student Services: a.pinto1@fdu.edu 604-648-4402 accessibility@fdu.edu
2	Review & Assessment The Manager of Student Services reviews documentation within 5–10 business days to confirm eligibility. Highly complex cases may be escalated to the Accommodation Committee. Students will be contacted if additional information is required.
3	Student Consultation Student meets with the Manager of Student Services to discuss how the disability may affect coursework and to determine appropriate accommodations.
4	Accommodation Letters Issued Upon approval, the Manager of Student Services prepares Accommodation Letters for each relevant instructor. Letters confirm approved accommodations without disclosing the nature of the disability.
5	Student Notifies Instructors Student delivers Accommodation Letters to instructors within the first two weeks of the semester and discusses implementation with each instructor.
6	Implementation Instructors implement approved accommodations. Testing accommodations are coordinated through Student Services when required.
7	Ongoing Monitoring & Renewal See Section XI for renewal requirements. Students contact Student Services if any issues arise with accommodation implementation.

XI. Accommodation Renewal

Disability Type	Renewal Requirement
Permanent Disability	Annual renewal — student submits a new Disability Disclosure Form once per academic year. New documentation is not required unless there has been a significant change in the student's condition.
Temporary Disability	Renewal each semester or as the condition changes. Updated medical documentation may be required to reflect the student's current functional limitations.
Mental Health Condition	Annual renewal. If the condition significantly changes, updated documentation from a registered psychologist or psychiatrist may be requested.
Chronic or Fluctuating Condition	Annual renewal with periodic check-ins as needed, depending on the nature of the condition.

XII. Adapted Testing Policy

The Manager of Student Services coordinates adapted testing accommodations. The following procedures apply:

- Students must provide Accommodation Letters to instructors early in the semester
- Students must remind instructors at least three (3) working days prior to exams
- Exams are normally taken at the same time as the rest of the class unless alternative arrangements are explicitly approved
- Students must arrive on time — late arrivals may forfeit extended time at the discretion of the Manager of Student Services
- All adapted exams are proctored to ensure academic integrity
- Students must remain in the testing room during exams unless authorized to leave
- Instructors must deliver exam materials to the designated testing location at least one business day before the exam

XIII. Examples of Academic Accommodations

Accommodations are tailored to each student's individual circumstances. The following are examples only and do not constitute an exhaustive list.

Testing	Course	Alternative Media	Physical & Environment
- Extended test time (typically 1.5x) - Distraction-reduced environment - Reader support - Scribe or speech-to-text - Calculator or laptop use - Alternative test formats	- Note-taking support - Priority course registration - Assignment extension consideration - Audio recording of lectures - Reduced course load consideration - Course substitutions where appropriate	- Large print materials - Braille materials - Recorded or captioned lectures - Electronic textbooks - Accessible digital formats - ASL interpretation	- Preferential seating - Adaptive keyboards - Assistive listening devices - Breaks during class or exams - Classroom environment adjustments - Assistive technology

XIV. Escalation and Appeal Procedures

XIV.I — Formal Appeal to the Accommodation Committee

If informal resolution is unsuccessful, the student or instructor may submit a formal written appeal to the Accommodation Committee within ten (10) business days following the informal process. Previously approved, non-disputed accommodations will continue to be implemented during the appeal review.

XIV.II — Committee Review and Final Determination

The Accommodation Committee will review the appeal, original documentation, and the Manager's assessment rationale. A final, binding written decision will be issued to all parties within fifteen (15) business days of receiving the formal appeal.

XIV.III — Further Escalation

If a student believes their rights under the BC Human Rights Code have been violated and the internal process has been exhausted, they may file a complaint with the BC Human Rights Tribunal at bchrt.bc.ca.

BC HUMAN RIGHTS TRIBUNAL:

Students have the right to file a complaint with the BC Human Rights Tribunal if they believe they have been discriminated against based on disability. This is an external process independent of FDU Vancouver's internal appeals. More information: bchrt.bc.ca

XV. Limits of the University's Duty to Accommodate

XV.I — Essential Learning Outcomes and BFARs

FDUV is committed to providing reasonable accommodations; however, the university is not required to grant accommodations that compromise the core competencies, essential skills, or Bona Fide Academic Requirements (BFARs) of a course or program. Accommodations provide equal access but must not lower academic standards or alter fundamental program requirements.

XV.II — Undue Hardship

The university's duty to accommodate extends to the point of Undue Hardship as recognized under the BC Human Rights Code. The undue hardship threshold is high — cost alone is generally not sufficient to establish undue hardship. FDUV may decline a specific accommodation if it would cause undue hardship considering:

- Substantial risk to institutional health and safety
- Significant alteration to the fundamental nature of the academic program
- Severe operational or financial disruption that cannot be reasonably mitigated

If undue hardship is established, the Manager of Student Services and the Accommodation Committee will work collaboratively with the student to explore alternative, reasonable accommodations that provide equitable academic access.

XVI. Contact Information

Contact	Details
Manager of Student Services	Arthur Alexandre Pinto
Phone	604-648-4402
Email	a.pinto1@fd�.edu
General Accessibility Email	accessibility@fd�.edu
Office Hours	Monday to Friday, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM. Closed weekends and university holidays.
FDU Accessibility Page	fd�.edu/campuses/vancouver-campus/student-services/centre-for-accessibility/
BC Human Rights Tribunal	bchrt.bc.ca 604-775-2000 1-888-440-8844

XVII. Revision History

Version	Date	Revised By	Summary of Changes
v1.0	June 2026	Arthur Alexandre Pinto	Initial final version. Removed ADA/Section 504 references. Added BC Human Rights Code, Accessible BC Act (2021), FIPPA, and PIPA as legal authority. Added Accessible BC Act compliance section with three mandatory requirements. Added mental health disability definition and

			documentation. Added duty to inquire. Added renewal framework distinguishing permanent, temporary, and mental health conditions. Added BC Human Rights Tribunal reference. Updated contact information. Added processing timeline of 5–10 business days.
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