Student and Alumni Toolkit: Resources for Persons with Disabilities in the Workplace

Accessible Learning- May 2022
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Acknowledgment

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Introduction

Students with disabilities have traditionally faced several barriers in obtaining and successfully participating in employment, experiential learning, and Work Integrated Learning (WIL) activities such as placements and co-op programs.
Purpose

The purpose of the student and alumni toolkit is to:

• Increase awareness about the duty to accommodate persons with disabilities and outline its process in the workplace.

• Equip students with tools to effectively request workplace accommodation.

• Increase discussion about the topic of accommodation in the workplace.
Click on an icon to view

- Disability Awareness
- Legal Framework
- Understanding Accommodation
- Frequently Asked Questions
- General Resources
- References
Disability in Canada

- Almost everyone will experience a temporary or permanent disability at some point in their lives.
- 6.2 million Canadians live with a disability.
- 70% are invisible. [5]
Students with Disabilities

• The number of post-secondary graduates with disabilities is increasing. [5]
  • 43% of people with disabilities have post-secondary credentials. [7]
  • 47,000 current post-secondary students with disabilities in Ontario.
The Benefits of Employment for Persons with Disabilities

- Even if fewer hours are worked, employment can increase the quality of life and reduce loneliness and social isolation.
- Poverty and levels of depression can be reduced.
- Working is an important piece of larger societal involvement and inclusion. [6]
Employment Rates

**EMPLOYMENT RATE BY AGE, PWDS VS. THOSE WITHOUT DISABILITIES, ONTARIO, 2017**

PWDS- Persons with Disabilities
Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC)

• Employers have a duty to accommodate a person’s disability related needs unless it causes an “undue hardship” such as, cost, availability of outside resources or funding, and health and safety requirements.

• 3 principles guide this:
  • Respect for dignity
  • Individualization
  • Inclusion and full participation [3]
Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC)

The right to “equal treatment with respect to employment” includes:

- applying for a job
- training
- terms of apprenticeship
- rate of pay
- hours of work
- performance evaluations [4]
Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

- Requires organizations to comply with accessibility standards.
- Remove barriers in 5 key areas: information and communications, employment, transportation, design of public spaces and customer service.
- The AODA and the Code work together to foster equality of opportunity and accessibility. [1]
Barriers to Employment

• According to the AODA, a barrier is “anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability.”

• Barriers can include limiting information and communications, and can be technological, attitudinal, physical or systemic. [1]
Removing Barriers under the AODA

• Employers must make workplaces and employment practices accessible to persons with disabilities.
• Make accessibility part of the recruitment, assessment and selection processes.
• Provide information about workplace accommodation for employees and job applicants. [1]
Resources

• Additional Information on the *Code*:
  [OHRC: Guide to Your Rights and Responsibilities under the Human Rights Code](#)

• Additional Information on the AODA:
  [AODA: Ontario Accessibility Information](#)

• Information on the Duty to Accommodate:
  [Word Document: The Duty to Accommodate](#)
Understanding Accommodation

Click on an icon to view

- What is Accommodation?
- Accommodation Tips
- Disclosure
- Roles and Responsibilities
To add slide numbers, choose Insert>Header & Footer, check the Slide number option, then click on Apply to All.

Understanding Accommodation

- Accommodation removes barriers so persons with disabilities can participate fully in the work environment and the workplace can fit their unique circumstances. [11]
The Benefits of Accommodation for Persons with Disabilities

- Higher levels of job satisfaction
- Less turnover
- Increased opportunities for advancement
Accommodation Tips

• Accommodation is a discussion between parties.
• Accommodation needs to be reasonable and appropriate.
• Determining an appropriate accommodation may take time. It is a process. [11]
Accommodations Tips

- Modifying the job application process
- Granting work relief to administer medication
- Granting permission to work from home or from a different location
- Providing a qualified reader or interpreter
- Granting time off to an employee to report to scheduled doctor appointments
- Reassigning an individual to a vacant position
- Permitting an individual to make personal telephone calls (such as those to a doctor) during work time
- Modifying the equipment necessary to enable the individual to do a job

Additional Accommodation Tips
Accommodation Tips

Sheridan Alumni: George Alevizos

George Alevizos (Theatre and Drama Studies ’19) is an actor who has appeared in *Star Trek Discovery*, TV commercials and many live theatre productions. He was the first graduate in a wheelchair of any professional theatre training program in Canada and is a strong advocate for actors with disabilities and disability representation in the media.

Article: Theatre grad leads fight for disability rights
Disclosure

• Disclosure is the act of making a disability-related need known.

• Employees are required to share information with employers about their disability-related limitations but not a diagnosis or medical history unless they can prove why it is necessary. [5] [9]
Disclosure

Students

• Sheridan personnel will not disclose a student’s disability status without their written consent. Only the student will share their disability-related information, as necessary.

Alumni

• Many workplaces train managers to notice the need for accommodation and ask before a formal request is made by the employee.
Disclosure Resources

• **Information on the pros and cons of when to disclose:**
  [Discover Ability: Tips and Considerations for Persons Disclosing a Disability to an Employer](#)

• **General information on disclosure:**
  [Discover Ability: Tips About Disclosure](#)
Roles and Responsibilities

Click on an icon to view

Workplace Accommodation

Student Accommodation
Workplace Accommodation- How to Request

• Workplace accommodation can be requested at any time, including during the selection and recruitment process.

• The process of requesting accommodation may vary across organizations- usually, requests are directed to Human Resources or a direct Supervisor.

• Accommodations may be requested on an interim basis
Workplace Accommodation Resources

• The following slides include resources around:
  • Accessible recruitment processes
  • Accommodation processes and accessible workplaces
  • Mental health strategies
  • Community services and links to inclusive employers
Workplace Accommodation

- [AODA: How to Make the Hiring Process Accessible](#)
- [Monster.ca: Ontario’s Accessibility Requirements for Recruitment and Selection](#)
Workplace Accommodation

- City of Toronto: Accommodation Process Guide
- Strategies for Mental Health in the Workplace
- Ontario.ca: Accessible Workplaces
Workplace Resources

- **Job Accommodation Network (JAN):**
  Disability-Related Information, Accommodations, and Employment Solutions
- **Canada Life:**
  Strategies and Tools for Mental Health in the Workplace
- **Community Employment Services (CES):**
  Sheridan College Skill Building Service for Job Seekers
- **Discover Ability Job Search:**
  Links to Inclusive Employers
Student Accommodation

**Sheridan College’s Accessible Learning department will:**

- Work with students to determine their strengths and functional limitations.
- Coach students on how to discuss their accommodation needs.
- Collaborate with multiple stakeholders to determine appropriate accommodation for the student.
- Liaise with and support students, employers, and other Sheridan departments.
Student Accommodation

Students will:

- Consult with Accessible Learning (AL) Advisor a month before the work term with program requirements and necessary paperwork.
- Complete the Work Integrated Learning (WIL) Accommodation Form with recommendations from relevant parties and submit before starting the work term.
- Inform the WIL Practitioner and employer of an accommodation need.
- Students will participate in ongoing accommodation discussions.
Student Accommodation

Students will:

- Complete a Sheridan College Work Integrated Learning (WIL) Accommodation Form.
- Share the form with the employer or follow their accommodation process.
- Be open and flexible during accommodation discussions.
- Perform the core duties of the job once an accommodation has been put in place.
Student Accommodation

Host Organization will:

• Accept accommodation requests in good faith and in accordance with the Code.
• Uphold the principles of respect for dignity, individualization, and integration and full participation.
• Work with the student to develop and implement appropriate accommodation(s).
• Respect the student’s confidentiality unless the student provides written consent.
Student Resources

• **Sheridan College Co-op/Internship representatives by program:**
  [Sheridan Co-op and Internship Contacts by Program](#)

• **Contact your Accessible Learning Advisor or Accessible Learning general contact email:**
  [askanadvisor@sheridancollege.ca](mailto:askanadvisor@sheridancollege.ca)

• **FACE IT Club:**
  Friends Accepting Challenges and Endeavoring to Improve Themselves- Activities and discussions for students on the Spectrum  [askanadvisor@sheridancollege.ca](mailto:askanadvisor@sheridancollege.ca)
Frequently Asked Questions

• **Who can students contact at Sheridan for support?** Students can contact their Accessible Learning Advisor, their Work Integrated Learning Practitioner (title may be different depending on program), or Academic Advisor.

• **Who can Alumni contact at Sheridan for information?** Alumni can contact Community Employee Services and/or Sheridan College Career Services.
Frequently Asked Questions

• **When should workplace accommodation be requested?** Be Proactive! Students are encouraged to contact their Accessible Learning Advisor and Work Integrated Learning Practitioner as soon as they recognize a need for workplace accommodation. This will allow time to put measures in place.
Frequently Asked Questions

• **Can employers ask students about their disability?** Students are not required to disclose their disability diagnosis. Employers may ask questions or request additional information if necessary to determine the appropriateness of an accommodation. Focus is on functional limitations as identified through documentation from a Registered Health Care Professional.
Frequently Asked Questions

• **Can employers refuse a request for accommodation(s)?**
  Employers have a legal duty to accommodate persons with disabilities under the Code, to the point of undue hardship. There are 3 considerations when assessing whether an accommodation would cause undue hardship:
  • Cost
  • Outside sources of funding, if any
  • Health and safety requirements, if any
Frequently Asked Questions

• **Will academic accommodations from Accessible Learning transfer to the work site?**

• An academic accommodation put in place at Sheridan will not transfer to a workplace outside of the College. The student is responsible to request their need for accommodation(s) to their site supervisor. Students can contact their Accessible Learning Advisor, WIL Practitioner, and/or their Academic Advisor for assistance.
Frequently Asked Questions

• Will students be treated differently if they make an accommodation request? Making a request for accommodation should not alter how students are treated at the workplace. Employers have a legal duty to accommodate an employee with a disability under the *Code*, to the point of undue hardship.
General Resources

• **Make a Change Canada:**
  Federal Online Certificate Program: Coding and Web Development

• **EmployAbilities:**
  Workplace strategies and Disability-Related Information

• **JobStart:**
  Ontario Disability Supports for Employers and Employees
Thank you!

To all of those participating in our WIL programs, we thank you! We are inspired by you, our students and alumni, and sincerely hope that this toolkit is useful and informative.

The Accessible Learning Team
References


References


References


References


References

10. Statistics Canada. Table 13-10-0377-01 Labour force status of persons with and without disabilities aged 25 to 64 years, by age group and sex, Canada, provinces and territories.