



Athabasca University

Accessibility Services Handbook

A guide to Accessibility Services at AU

Thank you for registering with Accessibility Services!

Athabasca University is committed to providing students with disabilities reasonable, individualized accommodations and support services for the successful completion of Athabasca University programs and courses.

Please review and save your Student Handbook as it contains information on accessing accommodations as an Athabasca University student.

Contact Us

Contact Accessibility Services with questions regarding accommodations on your student file, assistance with disability related funding, alternate format, assistive technology, or other information on services available to students with a disability.

General Inquiries about accommodations.

asd@athabascau.ca



Inquiries about exams.

asdexam@athabascau.ca

Inquiries about alternate format, assistive technology, or funding for students with a disability.

AT@athabascau.ca



Phone (toll free): 1-800-788-9041 and request to be connected to Accessibility Services.



[Accessibility Services website](#)

To book an appointment to speak with an Accessibility Services team member, please use our [online booking calendar](#).

Information About Your Accommodations

Your accommodations will remain on your student file during your studies at Athabasca University. If your academic accommodation requirements change or do not accurately reflect your needs, please notify [Accessibility Services](#).

If you have registered with Accessibility Services in undergraduate studies and continue in a graduate program, your accommodations will need to be reassessed.

We look forward to working with you during your studies at Athabasca University!



SAMPLE

Below is a sample of your Confirmation of Accommodations letter. Once a student is registered with Accessibility Services, this letter lists the accommodations notated on the student file.

Confirmation of Accommodations

Date 1 August 2024

Student Affirmed Name

Student Legal Name

Student Identification Number

This student is registered with Accessibility Services and eligible for accommodations. The following academic accommodations are notated on the student's file:

Course accommodations

-

Exam accommodations

-

Exam accommodations are provided directly to the invigilator. Accommodations may be subject to course coordinator approval and will only be included on the exam accommodations if the course coordinator has provided necessary approvals.

Questions regarding the assessment and provision of accommodations may be directed to Accessibility Services. Contact them by [sending an email](#) or calling 1-800-788-9041 and requesting to be connected to Accessibility Services.

Disclosure

At the beginning of your course, Accessibility Services recommends that you email your Confirmation of Accommodation letter to your course tutor or instructor and course coordinator that you are a student who requires accommodation.

You are not required to send this information, and if you send it, you do not need to disclose the specific nature of your disability, however, it is important that your instructors know that you may require accommodations and the type of barriers that you may experience in course completion.

If you are not sure who the course coordinator is, you can use the [search tool for your course coordinator](#).

Starting New Courses

It is your responsibility to notify Accessibility Services when you register in new courses.

Step 1- Register in course(s)

Funded students - remember to apply for funding and complete the Course Registration Plan two months in advance of your start date.



Step 2- Review your course syllabus, what accommodations are needed?

Complete the New Course Accommodation Form and email to asd@athabascau.ca.



Step 3- On the first day of your course, send your Confirmation of Accommodation letter by email to your tutor and course coordinator (optional).

To request your accommodations, complete the New Course Accommodation Form and [email it to Accessibility Services](#).

The [New Course Accommodation Form](#) is available on our website.

You are encouraged to submit your New Course Accommodation Form 4-6 weeks in advance of your course start date.

You need to submit the appropriate form for your approved accommodations to be applied.

Accommodations notated on your student file will be processed once you send in the New Course Accommodation Form. **Delays in submitting your request may result in delays in processing and accommodations may not be available for your start date.**

New Course Accommodations

Your individualized accommodations are outlined in your Confirmation of Accommodation and/or the AS handbook you received upon registration with Accessibility Services.

Student information

Student Name	
Athabasca University ID	
Date	

What courses are you registered in?

Course Name	Course Number	Start Date

Review the course syllabus and study guide for content and academic activities to determine your needed accommodations in that course.

Timed Quizzes - Does the course have timed quizzes that you need additional time added? Please list.

Course Name	Course Number

Alternate Format Course Material – Do you need alternate formats for required readings? The accommodation must be related to a disability need and exist in your accommodation plan. (i.e. Braille diagram alternative, PDF for assistive technology, etc.).

Course Name	Course Number	Format Required	Materials needed (e.g. textbook, etc.)

Exam accommodations requiring coordinator approval.

Do you have accommodations that require Course Coordinator approval as outlined in your Confirmation of Accommodation letter. Please indicate the accommodations required as outlined in your Confirmation of Accommodation letter.

This information is located on page 2 of your Confirmation of Accommodation letter; if you do not have page 2, you can skip this section.

Course Name	Course Number	Accommodation Required

Canada Student Grant for Persons with Disabilities, Services and Equipment (funded students only)

If you are applying for the Canada Student Grant for Persons with Permanent Disabilities, Services & Equipment for the first time or require changes to your application, book an appointment with a Funding Specialist through the [online booking calendar](#) and select the Equipment and Services Grant option.

Check this box if you are a funded student and require disability related equipment or services that you have requested in the past and do not need an assessment. This information should be similar to your previous application.

Tutoring - Please indicate hours per week and tutor rate: _____

Name of Tutor: _____

Academic Strategist - Which Academic Strategist are you using?

Software subscription renewal - List software and cost: _____

THIS FORM IS REQUIRED EACH TIME YOU START A NEW COURSE.

EMAIL THIS COMPLETED FORM TO ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES AT ASD@ATHABASCAU.CA



Quizzes and Exams

Online quizzes and assessments

If you register for an Athabasca University course that has quizzes or online assessments that are timed and you require the additional time to be added, submit the [New Course Accommodations form](#) upon registering in a new course.

For information on exam accommodations, please refer to the [Accessibility Services Exam Accommodations](#) website.

Scheduling exams

When you are ready to write your examination, you must complete and submit an Examination Request online via your [MyAU portal](#). **When you request your exam through a virtual invigilator or at an established AU-approved invigilator, you must request your exam 20 days prior to your requested write date.**

You do not require permission to write an examination; however, we recommend you discuss your preparedness with your tutor or academic expert.

Scheduling your exam is a two-step process:

- 1) Contact your invigilator and select a date and time to write. Many on-site invigilation sites charge a fee; you are responsible for those costs. You are encouraged to discuss your accommodation needs with your invigilator at the time of booking.

Not all invigilation centres can meet your accommodation needs.

- 2) Submit your Examination Request form through your MyAU portal 20 days in advance of your scheduled write date.

You have two options for exam invigilation

Option 1: ProctorU

AU has partnered with ProctorU to host online invigilation services. If your exam is available to write online, ProctorU is your first choice. It allows you to write your exam from the comfort of your own home and is available 24/7 for learners who meet the technical requirements.

There is a 2-step process for booking your exam with ProctorU. You must first book your exam-invigilation appointment with ProctorU at least 20 calendar days prior to when you'd like to write your exam, then login to MyAU and request your exam for the same date you've booked through your invigilator.

ProctorU may update their process, so it is important to always review ProctorU's exam readiness guide and test your equipment before your exam.



Test your equipment at the same time of day you plan to write your exam. For example, if your exam is scheduled for a Tuesday at 2:00 pm, test your equipment on a Tuesday at 2:00 pm.

When requesting your exam for invigilation through your MyAU portal, use ProctorU's invigilation identification number: 3278826.

[Learn more about using ProctorU for your AU exam.](#)

Option 2: Approved on-site invigilation

There are approved invigilation sites throughout Canada. You can find an approved invigilator at the [Canada wide invigilation locations list](#).

At the time of booking your invigilator, confirm they can provide your accommodations.

Once you have booked your invigilation site, you can request your exam using your MyAU portal.

Ensure that you check the "needs accommodation" field so that your exam request is redirected to Accessibility Services for processing.

Your exam must be requested 20 days in advance of your intended write date.

If you are unable to access on-site invigilation and unable to use ProctorU, please contact asdexam@athabascau.ca to discuss your options.



Breaks During Exams

Understanding how breaks work during an invigilated exam

Athabasca University exam platforms do not allow for the timer to stop once your exam has started. If you have the accommodation to take a break during your exam, the timer on the exam will not stop.

To ensure you can take breaks throughout your exam, ten minutes for every hour of your exam is added to the **total time** of the exam.

For example, for a three-hour exam, accommodations for additional time breaks are calculated as:

Exam length = 3 hours

Additional time accommodation of time and a half = 1.5 hours

10-minute breaks for every hour = 40 minutes

Total time = 5 hours and 10 minutes

It is at your discretion when you take your breaks, however, they may not be taken all at one time.

When you need to take a break, inform your invigilator that you are taking a break and will return to the exam in 10 minutes.

Upon return, ensure your invigilator knows that you are ready to start writing again.



If you are using ProctorU for invigilation, you will need to scan the room each time you return from a break.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Accessibility Services Accommodated Exam Unit by [email](#) or call 1.800.788.9041 and request to be connected to Accessibility Services.

Alternate Format Course Material

As a student registered with Accessibility Services, you may be eligible for alternate format of course materials.

If you have the accommodation for alternate format of course materials in your Confirmation of Accommodations letter, inform Accessibility Services of your alternate format needs on your [New Course Accommodations Form](#).

If you do not have the accommodation of alternate format notated on your student file, please contact Accessibility Services to discuss your accommodations.

To discuss your accommodations, you are encouraged to book an appointment to speak with an Accessibility Advisor.

Please use our [online booking calendar](#).

Reduced Course Load

This accommodation will be added to your student file if you requested a reduced course load in Section I of the Verification of Accommodation form you submitted when registering with Accessibility Services.

If you would like to request a reduced course load after you registered with Accessibility Services, please email asd@athabascau.ca and request that it be added to your file. Additional medical may be required.

The accommodation of a reduced course load is available to you if you need it. You are not required to use this accommodation; however, it is available if you do.

Accessibility Services has reviewed your student file and placed a notation on your student record that for any future studies with Athabasca University you will be eligible to take a 40% reduced course load and be considered full time. This notation reads as follows:

Qualifies as full-time at a 40% course load.

This accommodation cannot be applied retroactively to registering with Accessibility Services.

Funded students

Funded students requesting this accommodation must establish status a student with a Permanent Disability (PD) or Persistent or Prolonged Disability (PPD) with their funding agency.

Provincial funding agencies have specific medical documentation requirements to establish status as a student with a disability. Please contact your provincial funding agency to request their documentation requirements.



If you have received the Canada Student Grant for Persons with Disabilities, you have already established status as a student with a disability with your funding agency and you do not need to provide additional medical. Check your student aid award letter for this information.

Reduced Course Load as a Funded Student

If you have applied for student financial aid, a reduced course load is **two, 3-credit courses in a four-month funded study period.**

If you want to use the reduced course load accommodation:

- When applying for student financial aid, ensure that you indicate that you are a student with a disability.



If you have never applied for funding as a student with a disability, contact your provincial funding agency as early as possible for the appropriate forms to establish status as a student with a disability. This form is often referred to as the Disability Verification form. Having a medical practitioner complete this form and the review process with your provincial funding agency may take time.

- Register for two courses when completing the [Course Registration Plan](#).

If you have submitted the required medical documentation to your provincial funding agency and have the notation on your file with Athabasca University, your Student Financial Aid Advisor will confirm your registration as full time with two courses per 4-month funded study period.

Reduced Course Load as a Self Funded Student

If you are self funding your studies, a reduced course load is **three, 3-credit courses in a six-month study period.**

For information on accessing financial aid, please refer to [Athabasca University's Student Financial Aid website](#).

Assistive Technology

Assistive or adaptive technology (AT) is a generic term that includes any piece of equipment, system or product used by a person with a disability to perform specific tasks, improve function, gain access to information, facilitate learning, reading, and writing.

Specific assistive technologies can be grouped into 4 categories of application:

- vision
- communication
- mobility
- cognition

AT focuses on removing barriers by applying technologies to impact areas instead of focusing on specific products, thus removing barriers by using low to high technologies in the most effective way possible. Successful use of assistive technology means that training and continued support need to be provided by an assistive technology specialist.

Additional Resources

Athabasca University has a variety of assistive and adaptive technology resources and products we can share with you. Accessibility Services provides information on available technologies on [our website](#).

Athabasca University also provides access to Read&Write. If you are interested in obtaining a license for your personal computer, please email AT@athabascau.ca.

AT assessments

An AT assessment is requested by the student. It includes innovative ways for students to evaluate resources and technology that may facilitate the learning journey at Athabasca University.

Our assistive tech experts likely have a resource or suggestion for you. We provide needs assessment reports, training, technical support, and advice.

AT funding

The price of such technologies may seem unaffordable. However, you may be eligible to apply for various funding opportunities for assistive technologies, technical support, training, and accessibility services. Our Available funding page can provide you with more information about options. Please contact our AT Team in Accessibility Services.

Training

Learning how to use assistive technology and apply it to the performance of several academic tasks is a critical component of how beneficial the technology may ultimately be. Many factors will have an impact on the amount of training needed and how the training is delivered, including:

Technical support

Our assistive technology specialists compile over 30 years of networking and AT service experience supporting people with disabilities in the AT industry. If solutions are not evident, then the resources provided via knowledgebase, vendor and manufacturer will most likely find the answer. We can help you or connect you to the right resource.

AT Loan Program

Accessibility Services provides a pool of devices for AU students to trial out new equipment prior to purchasing as well as for students unable to access funding to replace their equipment. One of our AT Specialists can discuss your equipment needs and arrange an AT loan with you.

To discuss your needs with an AT specialist, please use our [online booking calendar](#).



Extensions

Accessibility Services may provide course extensions with waived extension fees as an accommodation. The following information regarding extended time to complete course work has been added to your student file:

Eligible for additional course contract time, up to three 2-month course extensions with waived course extension fees.

Three 2-month extensions per course are the maximum available as per Athabasca University course extension policy. The extensions provided through this accommodation are only available for the first three total extensions to a course and are not in addition to previously obtained extensions. Extensions purchased prior to registration with Accessibility Services are not refundable.

To request an extension to an Athabasca University individualized study course(s), please submit your request before your contract end date.

Requests must be submitted through the link [Extension Request Form](#).

Course extensions cannot be automatically granted to students accessing provincial or federal funding, as it has consequences on current and future funding. Please contact your Student Financial Aid Advisor to discuss how extensions will affect your funding sfa@athabascau.ca.

Canada Student Grant for Persons with Disabilities

As a student with a permanent, persistent, or prolonged disability, you may be eligible for the Canada Student Grant for Students with Disabilities.

Note: This grant is not available to students from the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, and Quebec as they have their own student aid programs.

Eligibility for the Canada Student Grant for Persons with Disabilities and the Canada Student Grant for Services & Equipment – Students with Disabilities Grant requires demonstrated financial need through your provincial funding agency.

To be eligible for these grants, you must apply for funding through your provincial funding agency.

If you do not want to access the loan portion of your funding, you can return the loan portion once it is disbursed. Some provincial funding agencies provide a separate application process to request grant only funding.

Each province has specific requirements on the medical documentation required to establish permanent disability or prolonged/persistent disability. Please contact your provincial funding agency to request the appropriate forms. You can find the contact information for your province at the [Canada Student Aid website](#).



Students who have established status as a student with persistent or prolonged disability with their provincial funding agency are required to confirm disability status on every application. If you do not confirm disability status, you will be required to submit additional medical documentation.

Canada Student Grant for Persons with Disabilities (CSG-PD)

\$2,800 per funding year

Once you have established permanent, persistent, or prolonged disability with your provincial funding agency, you are automatically assessed for this grant each time you apply for financial aid.

Canada Student Grant for Services & Equipment – Students with Disabilities (CSG-DSE)

You may be able to receive up to a maximum of \$20,000/academic year in equipment and/or services, although there are funding caps to this amount. This grant is to cover the costs of disability related equipment such as specialized software to support your learning activities as well as for services such as tutoring or academic strategy sessions.

It needs to be applied for each funded study term.

Applying for student financial aid is a 2-step process.

Information on attending Athabasca University as a funded student is available on the [Student Financial Aid website](#).

Once you have applied for funding and completed the [Course Registration Plan](#), Accessibility Services will assist you in completing your application for disability related equipment or services.

Some provincial funding agencies require an assessment for the equipment and services requested. To schedule an appointment with a funding specialist, please use the [online booking calendar](#). When selecting a service, choose “Equipment and Services Assessment (for funding applications).”

Indicate your equipment and service needs on your [New Course Accommodations Form](#). If an appointment is required to discuss your application, an email will be sent with the booking information.



If you have applied for this funding in the past, and only require the application to request a continuation of services with the same service provider or a renewal to a software subscription, you may not need to book an appointment.



Mental Health and Wellness

Athabasca University has a variety of resources and programs.

If you are in crisis and need to connect with someone, you can contact Carepath by BayShore at 1-855-491-5744 or the Canada Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-833-456-4566. In the event of an emergency, please call 911.

Wellness programs and resources

[Carepath by BayShore](#)

Comprehensive mental health services are available to support you through your unique needs.

[TalkCampus](#)

This is your safe space to chat anonymously with students from around the world going through the similar struggles you are, at any time.

211

If you have questions about the services that may exist in your area in Canada, you can try calling 211 for more information.

[Online learning course](#)

Complete our free "Learning to Learn Online" course to get more comfortable with the unique challenges of online learning.

[Wellness Together](#)

Wellness Together is a free tool for Canadians seeking mental health support and resources.

[Recovery Colleges](#)

Access to free online courses that review mental health and other topics.

Are you feeling stressed about your next exam?

From learning how to alleviate exam anxiety to getting familiar with our online testing environment, we've prepared some useful resources for you.

Explore more exam services:

[Booking exams](#)

[Preparing for exams](#)

[Writing online exams](#)



