

**University of Guelph  
Department of History  
Policy and Guidelines on Accommodating Students  
Winter 2017**

The History Department is committed to serving all University of Guelph students and upholds Ontario Human Rights Legislation, University of Guelph policies and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. In addition, the History Department is committed to working in partnership with the Office of Student Affairs, Academic Advising Offices, Counselling Services, Student Health Services and the Student Accessibility Services to ensure that its students are treated in a fair, equitable and compassionate manner, while upholding a high academic standard.

**Why might students seek accommodation?**

Students may seek accommodation for their coursework if they:

- have a diagnosed physical or learning disability
- have a short-term illness
- have a long term illness or acquired injury
- have a psychological or emotional disability (e.g. Generalized Anxiety Disorder, depression)
- are experiencing bereavement
- are experiencing a mental health crisis
- are representing the University of Guelph as a member of a varsity sport team, musical ensemble, etc.
- have been a victim of sexual assault

**Legal Obligations of History Instructors**

Under Ontario Human Rights Legislation, instructors must make an effort to accommodate students with documented physical and learning disabilities, normally registered with Student Accessibility Services. Accommodations must be made except in cases where they would cause '**undue hardship**' (eg. require the instructor to re-write and deliver alternative lectures) or if accommodation would contravene the '**essential requirements**' which should be set out in the Course Learning Objectives. In smaller class settings such requirements may include skills related to oral communication and the ability to contribute to debate.

In practice, instructors are engage in dialogue with all student support offices on campus, as well as the student seeking accommodation, to ensure that accommodations are equitable and appropriate for the course. Student support offices (such as SAS) may make recommendations based on the needs of the students, but it is important to realize that these offices may not have all of the relevant information such as a full understanding of the purpose of an assignment or the classroom context. Instructors are encouraged to share information with student support personnel about the student's performance in a course, being aware that these personnel may be limited in the information that they can share with the instructor.

Instructors cannot ask students registered with SAS to disclose their diagnosis or condition. Instead, they may ask about what functional impairments result from their condition: e.g. reading, concentration,

studying etc. Instructors may ask students what accommodations they have been approved for and/or may (with the student's permission) ask their SAS Advisor for this information. For full details of the Accessibility Services policy visit:

<https://wellness.uoguelph.ca/accessibility/about-us/policy-guidelines>

Students who have been a victim of sexual assault are protected by the University of Guelph Sexual Violence Policy (January 2017). According to the policy (Section 7c), such students are entitled to “appropriate forms of academic consideration and other supports based on demonstrated need” regardless of whether they have made a formal complaint to University of Guelph authorities. If a student discloses that they have been a victim of sexual assault, they should be referred to the Student Affairs Case Director who will ensure that the student is advised of their rights and will be directed to resources on campus. If significant academic accommodations are to be made (e.g. major re-weighting of course components), the instructor may act in consultation with the Student Affairs Case Director and/or, (with the student's consent) the Department Chair. Every effort must be made to protect the confidentiality of the student and information should only be shared on a ‘need-to-know’ basis. For full details of the policy visit:

<https://uoguelph.civicweb.net/document/126417>

The Board of Undergraduate Studies asks instructors to make accommodations for students representing the University of Guelph in extracurricular activities (e.g. varsity athletes, musicians, artists) when there is a conflict between activities and course requirements that require the presence of the student in class (eg. a midterm, in-class writing assignment). Ultimately, the decision to make such accommodations rests with the instructor of the course. Activities for which accommodation might be considered are games, concerts or similar events, but not routine practices. Student athletes or performers should ask their coach or supervisor to contact the instructor in these cases.

### **In what ways might instructors be asked to accommodate students?**

- granting extensions or making alternate arrangements for missed in-class assignments
- alternate arrangements for a midterm or exam
- re-weighting course components (see note)

Instructors have control over all of the in-course components up until the grade submission date of the course. After that date, all incomplete assignments are to be handled by the Program Office (e.g. the BA Counselling Office).

### **Extensions**

Some students registered with SAS are entitled to an extension as part of their accommodation. SAS guidelines state that in such cases, the student must notify the instructor at least seven days prior to the

deadline that they require an extension. The decision to grant an extension rests entirely with the instructor of the course, but be aware that this decision may be the subject of appeal if it contravenes the AODA.

The following are general guidelines for extensions:

- consider granting short extensions (one or two days) for short-term illness that do not require documentation. The Calendar States “illness which lasts one or two days resulting in a missed deadline can usually be resolved between the faculty members and the student, often without documentation”
- consider offering staggered deadlines (e.g. full written feedback to those who submit on the early date, partial/minimal written feedback to those who submit on a later date)
- instructors maintain the right to set late penalties as they see appropriate; typical late penalties in the History Department range from 2% -5% per day
- instructors may (but are not required) to accept late work during the exam period
- instructors may not grant extensions beyond the date for Final Grade Submission.

### **Alternate Arrangements for Writing Exams/Midterms**

Some students are entitled to alternate arrangements and conditions for writing midterm and final exams that take place in the Accessibility Services Centre. University of Guelph regulations stipulate that students registered with SAS must book all final exams by the fortieth class day and all midterms 7 days in advance. It is helpful for SAS to know the format of the final exam (e.g. essay questions, multiple choice) in advance.

Normally, SAS will contact the History Department three days before the before the midterm or final exam to request a copy of the exam, identifying which students will be writing in the Exam Centre. Instructors may also make a general announcement in class encouraging SAS students writing elsewhere to identify themselves. SAS is not allowed to share any information about students requiring accommodation, without permission from the student. Full details of the process are outlined on the SAS webpage:

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/csd/faculty-staff/exam-process-faculty>

### **Re-weighting the Value of Course Assignments**

The Undergraduate Calendar lists the re-weighting of course assignments as a type of consideration that may be granted by the instructor. As the re-weighting of course assignments poses problems of equity and may compromise academic integrity, such consideration should not be granted on a routine basis. There are, however, circumstances under which re-weighting may be the best option for a student undergoing difficulties. Such cases should be carefully considered and discussed with the Department Chair.

### **Asking for Documentation**

Instructors may ask students to provide documentation or confirmation before agreeing to any academic accommodation. Students are not required to reveal the nature of their illness or disability to the instructor, but confirmation can be provided by student support personnel. The following are

appropriate types of documents to request. Under Ontario Human Rights Legislation, instructors do not have the right to request documentation for religious accommodations.

In the case of ....	Appropriate Confirmation/Documentation
learning disability	call, email or note from SAS Student Advisor
illness or injury	call, email or note from doctor or Student Health Services
mental health crisis issue	call, email or note from Counselling Services or mental health professional (letters are not issued at walk-in sessions)
bereavement (not immediate family)	copy of obituary, copy of funeral service or call, email or note from Counselling Services
bereavement of immediate family member (parent or sibling)	same as above – in addition the student is strongly encouraged to meet with a counsellor from their Program Office (e.g. B.A. Counselling Office)
varsity match, performance etc.	email from coach, conductor or other supervising official
sexual assault	call, email or note from Student Affairs Case Director.

For small, weekly, in-class assignments, it can be helpful to use a ‘drop-the-lowest grade’ approach to allow some flexibility for students who miss class due to short-term illness and saves them having to produce a medical note.

## CAMPUS SERVICES

### Student Accessibility Services

Student Accessibility Services (SAS, formerly CSD) works to accommodate students with documented conditions that fall under eight broad categories: Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder; Hearing Disabilities; Vision Disabilities; Physical Disabilities; Medical Disabilities; Acquired Brain Injuries and Psychological/Emotional Disabilities. Instructors may be contacted by the Student Advisor to discuss accommodations. Remember that SAS personnel are trained in working with students with disabilities, and are not necessarily familiar with the expectations and norms of the History Department and therefore dialogue is important. Also, keep in mind that information regarding a particular student’s disability can only be released to the instructor with the student’s consent.

### Counselling Services

Counselling Services is the place to send students who are experiencing mental health crises or short-term emotional difficulties. They offer walk-in sessions during the Fall and Winter semesters between

12:30 and 3:30 pm and in the Summer from 2:00 and 3:30 pm. Counsellors at Counselling Services are trained to identify students needing further help and will connect them to the services that Students in distress need, whether on campus or in the community.

### **Academic Advising Offices (Program Counselling Offices)**

The Program Offices such as the BA Counselling Offices handle any serious academic issues that come up in the second half of the semester and which may lead to a deferral. Their role is primarily to advise students on the requirements of their degree program and help them to select courses. Because Program Counsellors are involved with granting academic consideration and deferred conditions, they often work with students experiencing difficulties including illness, bereavement or mental health issues. Keep in mind that Program Counsellors often have less information about a particular student than the course instructor. Instructors are encouraged to contact Program Counselling Offices (eg. the BA Counselling Office) if they have concerns about a particular student.

Remember that students from various degree programs choose History courses, therefore it is important to confirm what program the student is in before directing them to a Program Counselling Office. For example, only BA students should be directed to the BA Counselling Office.

### **Important Contacts for General Questions and Inquiries**

Student Accessibility Services:	Barry Townshend, Director
Counselling Services:	Trish Schmidt, Counsellor
BA Counselling Office:	Matt Edwards, Program Counsellor
Student Affairs Case Director:	Robin Begin, Manager of Students at Risk (on leave) Meaghan Morris – interim

# Responding to Students in Distress

---

## YOUR ROLE IN STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH

---

Each of us plays a critical role on campus in fostering and promoting student mental health. Students experiencing challenges will often turn to you for help. It is important to express your concern for the student and refer them to the appropriate campus resource. You can make a difference helping students in distress and preventing deterioration of health.

### IN CASES OF EMERGENCY INVOLVING:

Threat of Violence

Disruptive Behaviour

Direct Reference to Suicide or Suicide Attempts

After Hours Concerns

**CALL x2000 or 911**

**For consultation regarding a student in distress, call:**

**Counselling Services, x56233**  
8:15am - 4:15pm, Monday to Friday

## HOW TO RESPOND TO A STUDENT IN DISTRESS

- Take time to listen carefully to the student's thoughts and feelings
- Take the problem seriously; avoid judging, evaluating, or criticizing
- In non-judgmental terms, let the student know that you are concerned about his or her health and well-being
- Give the student personal support but be cautious about giving advice; maintain clear and consistent boundaries

Additional information regarding mental health on campus can be found online: [www.uoguelph.ca/mentalwellbeing](http://www.uoguelph.ca/mentalwellbeing)

## Refer students to the following resources for situations involving:

Medical Concerns:	Threats of Violence, Personal Safety:	Psychological or Emotional Concerns:	Disability/ Accommodation Related Concerns:	Sexual Assault:
Student Health Services x52131	Campus Police x2000	Counselling Services x53244	Student Accessibility Service x56208	Campus Police x2000 or Counselling Services x53244

---

## COMMON SIGNS OF STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

---

### **Academic:**

- Approaches you regarding problems affecting academic performance
- Deterioration in quality of work
- Missing assignments or exams
- Repeated absences from class without explanation

### **Physical:**

- Deterioration in physical appearance and/or hygiene
- Falling asleep in class
- Significant changes in energy
- Dramatic changes in weight
- Noticeable cuts, burns or bruises
- State of alcohol or drug intoxication

### **Emotional:**

- Discloses serious problems or losses in relationships
- Inappropriate emotional outbursts
- More withdrawn or animated than usual
- Spending an inordinate amount of your time discussing personal problems



---

## UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

---

The following services are available to students free of charge:

### Student Health Services

J.T. Powell Building  
x52131, Mon. to Fri.: 8:30am - 4:30pm  
[www.uoguelph.ca/studenthealthservices](http://www.uoguelph.ca/studenthealthservices)

### Counselling Services

Level 3, University Centre  
x53244, Mon. to Fri.: 8:15am - 4:15pm  
[www.uoguelph.ca/counselling](http://www.uoguelph.ca/counselling)

### Wellness Education Centre

2nd Floor, J.T. Powell Building  
x53327, Mon. to Fri.: 8:30am - 4:30pm  
[www.uoguelph.ca/studenthealthservices/wellness](http://www.uoguelph.ca/studenthealthservices/wellness)

### Student Support Network

Raithby House  
Mon. to Fri.: 12pm - 10pm  
[www.uoguelph.ca/counselling/student-support-network](http://www.uoguelph.ca/counselling/student-support-network)

---

## AFTER HOURS

---

### Campus Community Police

Trent Building  
x2000, available 24/7  
[www.uoguelph.ca/police](http://www.uoguelph.ca/police)

### Good2Talk

1-866-925-5454

### Here 24/7

1-844-437-3427

---

## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

---

### Sexual Assault Response and Care

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/vpacademic/sexual-assault/>

### Mental Wellbeing at Guelph

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/mentalwellbeing/>

### Mental Health Training




<https://uoguelph.morefeetontheground.ca/>

### Feeling Better Now

[www.feelingbetternow.com/uoguelph](http://www.feelingbetternow.com/uoguelph)

To receive this document in an alternative format please contact the Office of Student Affairs by emailing: [st\\_affs@uoguelph.ca](mailto:st_affs@uoguelph.ca)

# When Should I Refer a Student?

	<p><b>SITUATIONS REQUIRING NO ASSISTANCE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No risk of harm to self or others</li> <li>• Distress is limited to one area of student's life (academics, personal, etc.)</li> </ul> <p><b>Your Role:</b> Inform student about available resources, express concern and provide personal support by listening carefully to the student.</p>
	<p><b>SITUATIONS REQUIRING SOME ASSISTANCE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unclear if there is a risk of harm to self or others</li> <li>• Multiple symptoms of distress affecting student's life to some extent</li> </ul> <p><b>Your Role:</b> Inform student about available resources, consult with Counselling Services or Campus Community Police to determine whether there is a risk of harm and next steps.</p>
	<p><b>SITUATIONS REQUIRING IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Threat of violence or harm to self or others</li> <li>• Direct or indirect reference to suicide</li> <li>• Acute distress affecting student's ability to function</li> </ul> <p><b>Your Role:</b> Contact Campus Community Police or Counselling Services and express your concern for the student. Campus Community Police or Counselling Services will assess the situation to ensure the safety of everyone involved and determine course of action.</p>

# Who Do I Contact?

RESPONDING TO STUDENTS IN DISTRESS			
Contact	Campus Community Police x2000 24/7	Counselling Services x56233 8:15am– 4:15pm	Manager, Students At Risk x53020 8:30am– 4:30pm
Behaviour	Action		
Poses threat to self or others, indirect or direct reference to suicide	1	2	2
Threats of violence or personal safety concern	1		2
Displays disruptive behaviour in class or fieldwork		1	2
Expresses distress about personal problems or spends an inordinate amount of time discussing issues with you		1	
Significant, concerning physical changes (change in hygiene, weight, noticeable cuts or bruises)		1	
Markedly unusual thinking or behaviour		1	

Legend for Actions			
1	Contact for direction/action	2	Consult for extra support

## Manager, Students At Risk

The Manager, Students At Risk is responsible for coordinating support for At Risk Students.

To receive this document in an alternative format please contact the Office of Student Affairs by emailing: [st\\_affs@uoguelph.ca](mailto:st_affs@uoguelph.ca)