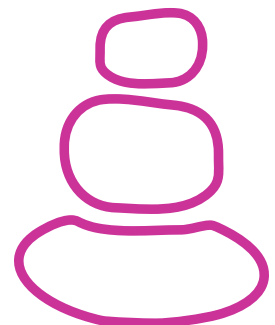




**Student Handbook**

**Academic  
Accommodation  
Support**



# We are Academic Accommodation Support (AAS)

As Ryerson University's disability services office, we work confidentially and directly with incoming and returning students who live with both temporary and permanent disabilities that impact their academic functioning.

Our job is to work with students to create and implement an individualised academic accommodation plan so that they can fully participate in their studies whether at the certificate, undergraduate or graduate level. We work with any student who requires academic accommodation regardless of their program or course load.

**This handbook is your roadmap to the accommodation process at Ryerson.**

Please take the time to review it from start to finish. Then connect with us to have any of your questions answered or to book your intake appointment.

**In-person:** Student Learning Centre - 4th floor

**By phone:** 416-979-5290

**By email:** [aasadmin@ryerson.ca](mailto:aasadmin@ryerson.ca)

**Online:** [ryerson.ca/studentlearningsupport/academic-accommodation-support](https://ryerson.ca/studentlearningsupport/academic-accommodation-support)

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# Section 1: How to register with AAS

Registering with Academic Accommodation Support (AAS) is a key step in ensuring you get the necessary academic accommodation support you need to participate fully in your studies if you live with a documented, permanent or temporary disability such as:

- A learning disability (LD)
- A sensory impairment (such as vision, hearing)
- An acquired brain injury
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- A chronic health issue (such as epilepsy, migraines)
- A mobility issue
- A mental health disability (such as anxiety, depression)

We also work with you if you suspect you have a disability or are in the process of obtaining documentation of your disability. We will ensure that you have appropriate interim accommodations and supports in place.

## When to begin the registration process

Register for academic accommodation support as soon as possible, preferably prior to the start of the semester to ensure your accommodation plan is active when classes start. For incoming Ryerson students, it is recommended to register as soon as you accept an offer of admission. You will need your my.ryerson username and password to book your registration appointment and complete our intake form online. You can find more information about the steps for new Ryerson students [here](#).

Generally, new registration requests made after our final exam deadline will be scheduled for the following semester.

Follow these steps to register with AAS.

## Step 1: Obtain documentation and prepare to register

In order to complete our intake form and prepare for your registration appointment, you need to obtain documentation of your disability and make sure it is in a digital format in order for you to upload it in the appropriate place in the intake form. Documentation helps your academic accommodation facilitator understand the impact(s) of your disability on your academic functioning. Having this information ensures that your accommodation plan meets your individual learning needs.

You will also need to set aside approximately 45 minutes, and be prepared to provide information regarding any academic supports and strategies you used in the past to complete our intake form. The intake form asks for details about your goals, your academic history, how your disability/disabilities have impacted your studies and the supports and strategies that have worked for you in the past. It is best to be prepared to complete this online process so you can get through it without having to leave the session. This is important because our intake form does not save your information, you have to complete it after you get started. Thank you in advance for your patience.

If you do not have the required documentation to register with AAS, or if it is not in a digital format which you need to upload to our intake form, please contact us directly to inquire about registering:

**In person:** Student Learning Centre - 4th-floor  
Student Learning Support Main Reception, 341 Yonge Street  
**By phone:** 416-979-5290  
**By email:** aasadmin@ryerson.ca

We work with students who are in the process of obtaining documentation or who suspect they may have a disability.

### **Documentation requirements**

Documentation should clearly state the specific functional limitation(s) you experience in your academic setting. When we understand the correlation between your disability and its impact on how you learn, we are able to better collaborate with you to build the most appropriate and effective accommodation plan.

Our documentation requirements vary depending on the nature of your disability. There are two main types:

1. Students living with a Learning Disability, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, or who are on the Autism Spectrum

We require a copy of your most current psycho-educational assessment for learning disabilities and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, or a neuropsychological assessment for students with diagnoses on the Autism Spectrum, conducted by a registered psychologist trained to test for and diagnose the condition.

- The assessment must contain information on the tests administered as well as the scores obtained.
- The assessment must be completed at an adult age (>18), or within the last four (4) years.
- If you have an older psycho-educational assessment or Individual Education

Plan (IEP), we will discuss options at your registration appointment for getting an updated assessment, including possible funding options, and explore the possibility of interim accommodations.

You may be eligible for funding for a new or updated psycho-educational assessment through one of the bursaries listed on page 8 or through your insurance. Check with your insurance company benefits plan to see if you (or your partner/spouse, or perhaps one of your parents/guardian) are covered.

Sliding scale psycho-educational assessments are offered through the Regional Assessment and Resource Centre's Mobile Assessment Team. Your student accommodation facilitator will provide you with details if needed at your initial intake appointment.

## 2. Students living with a mental health, medical or sensory disability

We require a Disability Assessment Form to be completed by an appropriate, registered healthcare professional who is qualified to diagnose the disability and can thoroughly assess its impact on your academics. The form can be downloaded from our website or a hard copy picked up at the Student Learning Support Reception on the fourth floor of the Student Learning Centre.

- Documentation provided to us must clearly state the impact(s) of the disability on your academic functioning. This means there must be a direct correlation between the impact(s) and the accommodation(s) that are requested or recommended in the documentation.
- Documentation needs to be current (within the past year) so we have the most accurate information about the impact of your disability. This enables us to create the most effective accommodation plan with you.
- If you live with a mental health disability, you are not required to disclose your specific diagnosis statement, but it can be included if you would like us to know this information.

## **Step 2: Complete our online intake form and book your registration appointment**

Once you have obtained disability-related documentation, converted it into a digital format, and taken some time to consider your past academic challenges, successes, and the strategies that worked for you, we ask you to complete our intake form and registration appointment booking online. You will upload your documentation within the online intake form: [www.ryerson.ca/aasintake](http://www.ryerson.ca/aasintake) After completing the intake form, you will be prompted to choose a date and time for your registration appointment. Remember, you will meet with us for two (2) hours to attend the group format orientation and individual meeting with your facilitator. You will be considered registered with AAS after this meeting.

If you encounter any difficulties completing the intake form or booking your registration appointment online, please connect with us directly (416-979-5290 or aasadmin@ryerson.ca).

### **Confidentiality and consent**

Your confidentiality is very important to us. Any documents provided to, and correspondence with AAS, is treated confidentially. All documents are securely stored in accordance with the University's privacy and records policies. We do not share documents unless a student requests us to and provides written permission.

We only communicate with you and relevant Ryerson faculty and staff members for the purposes of facilitating your academic accommodation and related learning needs. We need your written permission before we communicate with others on your behalf, e.g. family members like parents and spouses.

### **Step 3: Attend your registration appointment**

The date of your registration appointment has arrived. You are booked to meet with us for two hours. The first hour is a group format orientation to our services and how to make the most of your accommodations. During the second hour of your appointment, you will meet confidentially with your Student Accommodation Facilitator to discuss your individual accommodation plan. Prompt arrival is necessary, as students who arrive late may be asked to reschedule.

### **What to expect**

At your registration appointment, you can expect to:

- learn important procedures for making use of your accommodations
- understand how to use AAS Online Services
- meet and get to know your facilitator
- review our confidentiality and consent forms
- discuss the impact(s) of your disability as it relates to your academics
- develop an individualised accommodation plan
- discuss other appropriate supports and services, including bursary and grant information (if relevant) and/or enhanced service providers
- discuss ongoing support

After this meeting, you are considered to be a student registered with AAS and your student accommodation facilitator will be your main contact with our office.

**Important note:** Students diagnosed with a print disability (a learning, physical or visual disability that prevents a person from reading conventional print) can request their books in an accessible format. Inform your facilitator of any print disability-related needs as soon

as possible, as this accessible format may take up to four weeks to arrange.

## **Understanding your accommodations**

Academic accommodations support your ability to access and participate fully in the academic environment in a positive way that is responsive to your learning needs.

It is important to understand that your recommended accommodations are based on the documentation on file, established best practices, the professional experience of our team, and your individual needs. It is possible for a student to live with a disability and not require accommodation, because there are no specific disability-related barriers in their particular learning environment. For example, if a student in a wheelchair has access to classrooms and washrooms, and can listen and take notes in the classroom, they may not require an academic accommodation.

Academic accommodations do not exempt you from meeting your program standards or essential learning requirements of a course.

## **Section 2: How to activate your accommodations**

Once registered with AAS, you need to activate your accommodations each semester. You do this by sending electronic accommodation letters to your professors or course instructors via our online system. After your letters are sent, we expect you to reach out to your professors or course instructors to discuss your individual accommodation plan and how it will work for each course. If you are not comfortable approaching them directly, contact your academic accommodation facilitator who can communicate with your professor or course instructor on your behalf.

### **Step 1: Send accommodation letters**

AAS has an online system that generates the sending of electronic letters to your professors or course instructors outlining your accommodations for each course. It is your responsibility to activate the sending of the letters by logging onto the AAS online services. Ideally, your letters are sent to your professors or course instructors as early as possible each semester, prior to a graded assignment, test or exam. You can access our online services from this web page:

[www.ryerson.ca/studentlearningsupport/academic-accommodation-support/](http://www.ryerson.ca/studentlearningsupport/academic-accommodation-support/)

Step-by-step instructions and a how-to video for sending the electronic letters are also available online.



The system allows you to decide which professors or course instructors to send your letters to, and which accommodations you wish to request in each course.

**Important note:** If you do not indicate a specific accommodation on a letter, that accommodation will not be available to you for that particular class.

If you receive a message preventing you from using the system, contact AAS immediately for help.

## Step 2: Follow-up with your instructors

Some accommodations require discussion with your professors or course instructors to determine how they will be implemented and/or any limitations. This is because some details need to be arranged collaboratively by both you and your professor or course instructor, such as the duration of extensions on assignments.

Your academic accommodation facilitator will provide information on the steps you can take to navigate these kinds of conversations during your intake appointment or at your request.

**Important note:** Please follow up with your facilitator right away if you and your professor or course instructor cannot come to an agreement when discussing an accommodation. With your permission, we will work with your professor or course instructor to come to an appropriate resolution.

## Step 3: Book necessary quizzes, tests and/or exams

Your accommodation plan may include accommodations for tests. Tests include quizzes, tests, midterms and final exams.

There are some responsibilities when booking to write your tests with accommodations at the Test Centre. Students may opt to write with the main class, but it is important to note that they will not have accommodations for that particular evaluation. In order to ensure your accommodations are in place for writing at the Test Centre, you are required to:

- Book via our online service.
- Book at least ten (10) days in advance. If you miss this deadline, an exceptional booking request form has to be completed online. The Test Centre cannot guarantee your exceptional booking request due to space limitations and invigilator availability, however every effort to fulfill your request will be made.
- Book your final exams by the deadline each semester.
- Always book for the same date and time as the class unless your professor or course instructor has arranged a different time or date with you in advance; they will need to

confirm this with the Test Centre.

Once you have completed the online booking, you will receive advance notice via your Ryerson email account of the following:

- test date
- start time
- exact location

### Online tests

To use your accommodations for online tests, you still need to book through the AAS online services. In the booking, indicate that the test is online, and whether it will be written at the Test Centre or if you are permitted to write off-campus. Online tests need to be written in the Test Centre unless the main class is also writing off-campus.

The Test Centre does not have the ability to change the duration (i.e. add extra time) of online tests. Speak to your professor in advance of the test date to ensure your accommodations are factored into the online platform being used.

### Day of your test

Please arrive at the scheduled location (confirmed in your email), approximately 15 minutes before the start time. For final exams, please arrive 30 minutes prior. Bring your Ryerson student card (your One Card) or a valid government issued photo ID as proof of your identity. This ID will be checked by the Test Centre.

### Contacting the Test Centre

If you have questions or encounter problems related to booking a test with academic accommodations, contact the Test Centre:

**By phone:** 416-979-5000, ext. 7932

**By email:** testcentre@ryerson.ca

## Step 4: Stay in touch

Keep your facilitator updated on any changes to your health or learning needs, or if you encounter any problems with school or using your accommodations. Facilitators are here to provide ongoing support to students, including working with professors or course instructors and/or academic departments to ensure that you have access to your accommodations as needed.

### Placement or practicum accommodations

If you are in a program that has a placement or practicum component (e.g. nursing, child

and youth care, social work, etc.), we will discuss your accommodations based on your disability-related needs in these contexts with you. Because implementation of placement and practicum accommodations often includes an external organization or agency (outside of Ryerson), it is essential to start the accommodation request process well in advance of when you apply for your placement. Contact your facilitator to arrange placement accommodations **at least one semester** before you apply for your placement assignment with your department.

## Section 3: Supplemental information

### Financial assistance

#### OSAP

Applying for the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) is the first step in determining eligibility for disability-related grants, bursaries, or funding for an assessment. OSAP is used by AAS to determine if you have financial need that would make you eligible for the various government grants and bursaries.

#### Grant for students with permanent disabilities

Students who are receiving OSAP and live with a documented, **permanent** disability may be eligible for the provincial Grant for Students with Permanent Disabilities.

To apply, check the permanent disability box on your OSAP application. You do not need to take a student loan to be eligible for funding. You can decline the loan portion of the program once your eligibility has been determined.

**Important note:** You will need to request a letter from AAS confirming that you live with a permanent disability.

#### Bursaries (BSWD & CSG-PDSE)

The Bursary for Students with Disabilities (BSWD) and the Canada Student Grant for Services and Equipment for Persons with Permanent Disabilities (CSG-PDSE) help eligible students meet their disability-related educational costs.

Consult with your facilitator for more information regarding these bursaries during your registration appointment.

### Enhanced services

You may be eligible to work with one or more of our enhanced service support providers. This will be discussed during your initial registration appointment. Working with one of

these staff members provides you with more opportunities to discuss various aspects of your accommodations and learning needs. These include:

### **Accessibility specialist**

If you live with a sensory disability and use service providers, such as sign language interpreters or computerized note-takers, you will need to connect with our student accessibility specialist to ensure we make appropriate arrangements for these supports.

### **Assistive technology specialist**

Our assistive technology specialist works with students to help them explore and learn to use technology-based supports for their academics. Your facilitator will connect you with an AAS assistive technology specialist, if applicable.

AAS also has eight computer workstations loaded with adaptive software reserved for students registered AAS.

### **Learning and transition facilitator**

Our learning and transition facilitator works with students to help them identify their learning strengths, and develop effective learning and study skills. Your facilitator will connect you with their programming, if applicable.

### **Student note-taking : RU Noted**

For students who will benefit from another student's notes, we offer the RU Noted student note-taking program as an enhanced service. Your facilitator will discuss your eligibility with you and how this support works at Ryerson, if applicable.

### **Library accessibility services**

The Ryerson University Library offers a wide range of supports and services to students who live with disabilities.

### **Student Learning Support (SLS)**

All students who are registered with AAS are welcome and encouraged to access the programs of Student Learning Support (SLS). SLS offers individual help, group sessions and workshops, English language practice, math tutoring, writing assistance and more. You do not need to disclose to AAS that you are using these supports.

## **Summer transition programs**

SHIFT (Students Heading Into Full Time) and Portage are free transition programs for students living with disabilities who are heading into full-time studies at any post-secondary institution in Ontario. We offer participants a space to explore possibilities for personal empowerment, and a positive start to their academic studies. **For event**

**dates and to register for SHIFT or Portage**, visit this web page: [www.ryerson.ca/studentlearningsupport/academic-accommodation-support](http://www.ryerson.ca/studentlearningsupport/academic-accommodation-support) You can also send an email to [shift@ryerson.ca](mailto:shift@ryerson.ca).

## Section 4: Pulling it all together - your responsibilities

You, of course, play a vital role in your accommodation plan. You have a number of responsibilities related to your accommodations. Please keep in mind the importance of:

- reading emails sent to your Ryerson email account
- reviewing and meeting the important deadlines we post (e.g. test booking deadlines)
- staying in touch, and letting us know if you need to discuss your accommodation plan and its implementation, including any problems you are encountering
- following the correct procedures associated with your accommodations
- activating the sending of accommodation letters each semester
- keeping track of the significant dates for students at Ryerson

### Self-advocacy

Self-advocacy is an important skill for all students. It is also a key component of using your accommodations.

“Self-advocacy is essentially about knowing yourself, being able to promote yourself and your skills while speaking to any challenges you may face because of your disability, and being able to request the accommodations you need. ...[It] is a skill that is developed. It takes practice.”<sup>1</sup>

Your facilitator will discuss what self-advocacy means in this context during your registration appointment. AAS also offers workshops and resources related to self-advocacy skills. For more information or guidance, speak with your facilitator.

Your facilitator is also always available to speak to professors or course instructors and academic departments on your behalf, with your permission, if you would like assistance with arranging any aspect of your accommodations.

<sup>1</sup>National Educational Association of Disabled Students, 2016

## Resource:

# Academic accommodation checklist

- Think about and decide if your disability impacts your academics and whether you will require academic accommodations
- Obtain your disability-related documentation
- Prepare to complete our online intake form and choose an appointment day/time
- Complete the intake form and upload your documentation
- Choose your registration appointment day and time online
- Attend your registration appointment to meet your facilitator and develop your accommodation plan
- Send electronic accommodation letters to your professors or course instructors via the AAS online system
- Follow-up with your professors or course instructors as necessary to discuss your accommodations
- Book tests (including quizzes, tests, midterms) for which you require accommodations via the AAS online system
- Check your Ryerson email account regularly to stay up-to-date with important AAS information and deadlines
- Stay in touch with your facilitator as necessary throughout the semester
- When the final exam schedule is released, book your final exams with accommodations via the AAS online system



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