

## ACCOMMODATION POLICY

**Approving Authority:** President & Chief Executive Officer

**Administrative Responsibility:** Director Policy Research & Advocacy

**Original Approval Date:** October 22, 2024

**Date of Most Recent Review/Revision:**

### **Related Policies, Procedures, and Documents:**

- Executive Limitation #2b – Treatment of Staff
  - Employee Standards and Performance Policy
  - Safe Disclosure Policy
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### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1. This policy outlines the Student's Union's commitment to foster an inclusive workplace that honours the dignity and diversity of all employees and outlines the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the accommodation process.

### **2. Definitions**

- 2.1. **Ableism:** A belief system, analogous to racism, sexism, or ageism, that sees persons with disabilities as being less worthy of respect and consideration, less able to contribute and participate, or of less inherent value than others.
  - 2.1.1. Ableism may be conscious or unconscious, or may be embedded in institutions, systems, or the broader culture of a society or workplace, limiting the opportunities of persons with disabilities.
- 2.2. **Barrier:** Anything that prevents a person's full participating in all aspects of society because of a Protected Ground, or for people with disabilities, barriers in the workplace including:
  - 2.2.1. Architectural barriers
  - 2.2.2. Information barriers
  - 2.2.3. Communication barriers
  - 2.2.4. Attitudinal barriers
  - 2.2.5. Technological barriers
  - 2.2.6. Policies or procedures that inadvertently pose barriers.
- 2.3. **Creed (Religion):** Religious or spiritual practice, typically involving a particular and comprehensive system of faith and worship, or a non-religious belief system that substantially influences a person's identity, worldview, and way of life.
- 2.4. **Disability:** Inclusive of the Human Rights Code (Ontario) definition, refers to any physical or

mental conditions that limit a person's movements, senses, or activities.

2.4.1. Disabilities can be episodic, temporary, or permanent, and can be visible to others or invisible.

2.5. **Employee:** A paid worker of the Students' Union.

2.6. **Employment Accommodation:** An ongoing process of adjusting or modifying the work environment, schedule, or method of doing work in order to address the individual needs of employees and job applicants who are protected from discrimination under the *Human Rights Code* (Ontario).

2.6.1. Accommodations may be temporary or on-going and involve finding reasonable solutions.

2.6.2. Examples of accommodation include, but are not limited to:

2.6.2.1. Workstation or physical space adjustments or modifications.

2.6.2.2. Assistive technologies

2.6.2.3. Temporary or permanent modified duties

2.6.2.4. Flexible work agreements

2.6.2.5. Name change

2.6.2.6. Accessible parking

2.6.2.7. Leaves of absence

2.7. **Family Status:** The state of being a parent-child type relationship, including relationships based on blood, adoption and care, responsibility, and commitment.

2.7.1. Family status includes parents caring for children and people who are the primary caregivers for aging parents or siblings with disabilities.

2.8. **Member:** All registered Wilfrid Laurier University undergraduate students are members of the Students' Union.

2.9. **Protected Grounds:** Protected categories listed under the *Human Rights Code* (Ontario), which include age, creed, disability, family and marital status, gender identity and gender expression, race and related groups, receipt of public assistance, record of offences, sex, or sexual orientation.

2.10. **Undue Hardship:** The excessive hardship placed on an employer associated with an accommodation when considering cost, availability of external funding, and the likeliness of a significant health and safety risk.

2.10.1. The onus is on the employer to prove undue hardship.

### 3. **Jurisdiction/Scope**

3.1. This policy applies to all Students' Union employees.

### 4. **General Principles**

4.1. The Students' Union is committed to preventing and removing barriers and providing reasonable

accommodation to employees to the point of undue hardship.

- 4.1.1. This includes, when possible, minimizing the need for accommodations by creating accessible workplaces and redesigning employment systems, practices, and policies.
- 4.2. The Students' Union is committed to providing services and facilitating events that are inclusive and barrier-free, while providing reasonable accommodations to our members, service recipients, and event attendees.
- 4.3. The Students' Union is committed to working collaboratively with employees to provide reasonable accommodations to enable them to perform the essential duties of their role or provide them with alternative duties that they are qualified to perform.
- 4.4. The Students' Union will support the accommodation needs of job applicants with respect while maintaining an equitable hiring process.
- 4.5. When considering employment accommodations for employees, the Students' Union will rely on the following principles:
  - 4.5.1. Respecting the personal integrity and worth of the person who requires an accommodation and maintaining the confidentiality of their personal information.
  - 4.5.2. Designing accommodations to meet the specific circumstances of each employee or job applicant.
  - 4.5.3. Collaborating with the person requiring the accommodation, supervisors, and the President and Executive Director to facilitate the employment accommodation.
  - 4.5.4. Consulting subject matter experts when developing accommodation plans.
  - 4.5.5. Ensure the employee who is being accommodated is involved in the process and accommodation plan design.
  - 4.5.6. When necessary, develop a written accommodation plan.

## **5. Types of Accommodations**

- 5.1. Accommodations in the workplace related to **disability** may include:
  - 5.1.1. Modified workstation
  - 5.1.2. Access to assistive technology
  - 5.1.3. Alternative, flexible, or reduced work schedule
  - 5.1.4. Accessible parking
- 5.2. Accommodations in the workplace related to **creed** may include:
  - 5.2.1. Time off for religious observances, ceremonies, holidays, and celebrations.
  - 5.2.2. Time and space for prayer and rituals during the workday.
  - 5.2.3. Considering the dietary needs, fasting, and religious dress.
  - 5.2.4. Practices related to the death of a loved one.
- 5.3. Accommodations in the workplace related to **family status** may include:
  - 5.3.1. Temporary or permanent changes to work schedules.
  - 5.3.2. Flexible work schedule or temporary leave of absence.
  - 5.3.3. Employees are expected to take all reasonable steps to find suitable childcare options that do not conflict with work responsibilities.
- 5.4. Accommodations in the workplace related to **gender identity** may include:

- 5.4.1. Use of preferred name and proper pronoun.
- 5.4.2. Access to gender inclusive washrooms and change rooms.
- 5.4.3. Access to systems that go beyond binary gender options (e.g. group retirement plans, extended benefits, etc.).

## **6. Roles and Responsibilities**

### Job Applicants

- 6.1. Job applicants may communicate any known accommodation to the Human Resources representative identified on the job posting.
- 6.2. The hiring supervisor should consult the applicant on the appropriate accommodation for the requirements of the hiring process.

### Employees Requesting Accommodations

- 6.3. Employees should communicate any known employment accommodation need to Human Resources at the earliest possible opportunity.
- 6.4. Employees may be asked to provide the Students' Union with necessary information to enable the assessment of employment accommodation needs (e.g. workplace restrictions).
  - 6.4.1. A diagnosis is not required for disability related accommodations.
- 6.5. Employees will be asked to participate and collaborate in the accommodation process, by assisting with the identification of reasonable accommodations.
- 6.6. Employees may be asked to co-operate with a third-party provide whose assistance or consultation is contributing to the management of the accommodation process.
- 6.7. Employees may be asked to adjust previously agreed upon accommodations if there is a change in circumstances, either with role responsibilities or available accommodations.

### Supervisors

- 6.8. Supervisors shall approach the accommodation process from a supportive point of view, with openness and flexibility.
- 6.9. Supervisors must receive accommodation requests in good faith and maintain privacy and confidentiality while responding as quickly as possible.
- 6.10. Supervisors must seek to understand the employee's needs including limitations and restrictions without asking invasive questions or request diagnoses.
- 6.11. As directed by Human Resources, supervisors shall manage the accommodation process by encouraging open dialogue and co-operation with the employee and consider all options and solutions.
- 6.12. As directed by Human Resources, supervisors must keep a written record of the accommodation request and the action taken.

### Human Resources

- 6.13. Human Resources will ensure processes are in place to enhance accessibility and inclusion in

the workplace.

- 6.14. A human resources representative will provide advice, guidelines, and resources to the employee requesting an accommodation and the supervisor facilitating the accommodation.
- 6.15. A human resource representative will support a job applicant, hiring committee, or hiring supervisor in arranging reasonable and appropriate accommodations for a job interview.
- 6.16. Human Resources will direct with the accommodation process, including facilitating accommodations for employees with disabilities, engaging with third-party support providers.

## **7. Accommodation Plans**

- 7.1. An employee or supervisor may request an accommodation plan to formalize the accommodations that will be provided.
- 7.2. Human Resources may require an accommodation plan.
- 7.3. Accommodation requests should be dealt with promptly, and where necessary, interim accommodation will be provided while long-term solutions are developed.
- 7.4. A human resources representative should be consulted when developing an accommodation plan.
- 7.5. The accommodation plan may include:
  - 7.5.1. A summary of the employee's limitations and needs, including any confidential assessments and information from experts or specialists.
  - 7.5.2. Arrangements for needed assessments by experts or professionals.
  - 7.5.3. Identification of the most appropriate short of undue hardship.
  - 7.5.4. A statement of annual goals, and specific steps to meet them.
  - 7.5.5. Clear timelines for providing the accommodation.
  - 7.5.6. Criteria for determining the success of the accommodation plan, together with a process for reviewing and re-assessing the accommodation plan as needed.
  - 7.5.7. An accountability mechanism consistent with the **Employee Standards and Performance Policy**.