

Accessibility & Plans for F20

Barry Praamsma-Townshend, Manager (Accessibility Services)



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Overview

- Implications for SAS Mandate
- Preparation of SAS Services
- Remote Learning & Accessibility
- Talking with Students
- Considerations for All Situations



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Implications for SAS Mandate

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General Mandate

- Receive and interpret disability-related information
- Assist in developing academic accommodation plans
- Collaborate with faculty who are experts in the academic requirements of their courses
- Relieve students of the need for disclosure to instructors
- No change at this time



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Limits of SAS Mandate

- A disability under the Code is required.
- Short-term illnesses and general worry/apprehension are not disabilities.
- For most people, symptoms of COVID-19 are not a disability and should be managed under the university's academic consideration policy.
- SAS assists with the process, but does not relieve instructors of their duty to accommodate under the Code.



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Important Policies

- Academic accommodation is driven by the Ontario Human Rights Code ("the Code").
- The authoritative source of info is the OHRC [*Policy on Accessible Education for Students with Disabilities*](#).
- AODA is not the same thing - more aspirational; fills gaps in standards that are not addressed by other legislation (e.g. the Building Code).
- Content on **public** websites must meet AODA standards. CourseLink is not a public website. However, there is a responsibility to create an inclusive and accessible learning environment.



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Preparation of SAS Services

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SAS Capacity

- More than 3,000 students annually
- S20 registration was up over last year
- New students for F20 - mixed indicators regarding what to expect
- Currently: more discussion about extensions on deadlines. We handle these cautiously.
- Try to avoid assessments during the first 3 weeks of the semester (time required to register new students).



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General SAS Preparations

- Disability-related documentation
- Advisors available by telephone or video call only
- Tips for Accessible Teaching & Learning ([link](#))
- SAS Exam Centre: some uncertainty



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Accommodations by SAS

- Note Taking Office: primarily for lectures
- FM Systems and sign language interpreters
- Scooters for on-campus use
- Educational assistants (classrooms)
- Learning strategies and writing support



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SAS Exam Centre (F2F)

- Re-opening is contingent on the Library's hours.
- 3 or 4 students per seating (start times).
- Maybe up to two dozen students writing at a time.
- Flexibility might be needed around scheduling.
- Online exams will not be eligible for the exam centre unless there is no other way of providing the required accommodation.
- A copy of the exam is required a minimum of 3 days ahead of time.



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Strategies in Development

- SAS is exploring a shift to receiving and returning exams digitally.
- We have some capacity for online invigilation by a staff person rather than Respondus (resource intensive).



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Online Quizzes, Tests and Exams

- Lists provided to the instructor (and possibly CourseLink Support)
- Request a list by emailing sasexams@uoguelph.ca
- Lists automatically generated if the exam is scheduled by the Registrar
- Lists generated 5 to 7 days before the assessment
- Tell your students that you are receiving info from SAS
- Break longer assessments (60+ minutes) into two or more pieces where students can take a break between each one.



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Remote Learning & Accessibility

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Synchronous Classes

- Good for lots of students - provides important structure.
- Be prepared for absences due to a disability.
- Faculty concerned about intellectual property are not required to record their lectures, but they must provide an equitable opportunity to learn missed content.



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Hearing & Vision

- Briefly describe visual content (graphs, diagrams, illustrations, etc.)
- Speak slowly and clearly
- Auto-captioning is helpful for all learners
- Professional captioning may be required as an accommodation (SAS will reach out when needed).



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Other Considerations

- Difficulties with turn-taking
- Be gracious and discrete
- Set deadlines at the start of class or during business hours.



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Learning in a Virtual Environment

- Some students have been victims of online harassment, bullying and stalking.
- Some homes are characterized by chaos, violence, substances, or emotional abuse.
- Conversely, some homes provide better support than being in Guelph.
- Most likely to see: distractions from pets or family members.
- Issues around interpersonal boundaries is common.



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Teaching in a Virtual Environment

- It is normal to feel apprehensive at first.
- Most people find their comfort level increases with experience.
- Try having a couple of business meetings with colleagues to practice.
- Make it okay to ask questions or express uncertainty.
- Look at the resources from OTL and Open-Ed.



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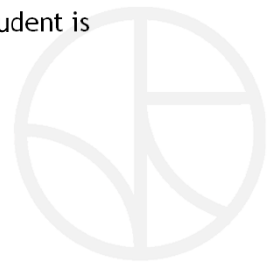
Talking with Students

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You can ask...

- It looks like you are having difficulties, is it possible this is because of a disability?
- Are you registered with SAS?
- Do you need information about how to access SAS?
- May I consult with your SAS advisor?

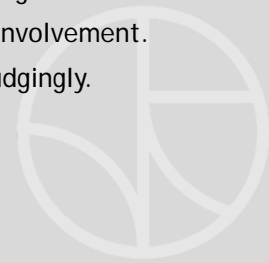
Instructors do not have a duty to accommodate a disability unless the student is registered with SAS.



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Please avoid...

- "Students with disabilities must make themselves known to the instructor at the start of the semester."
- Telling students they should request accommodation directly from the instructor rather than SAS.
- Probing about students' health, diagnoses or treatment.
- Agreeing to academic accommodation that undermines essential learning outcomes.
- Making decisions about disability-related accommodation without SAS involvement.
- Indicating to a student that an accommodation has been granted begrudgingly.



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Considerations for Situations

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Privacy & Confidentiality

- Do not disclose that a student has a disability to colleagues or staff unless they need to know as a part of the accommodation process.
- If using an SAS list to email students, always use the BCC field.
- Do not draw attention to a student's disability in front of their peers.
- Consider resources provided by the university's Privacy Officer in the Secretariat.



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Information Required for Accommodation

- Clear learning outcomes
- Information about learning activities and course requirements
- Details regarding all methods of assessment. For quizzes, tests and exams:
 - Date
 - Starting time
 - Length of time
 - Format
- Use the course outline checklist on the Provost's website
- Provide the information as early as possible



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Re-weighting Assessments

- The Code requires an equitable opportunity for students with disabilities to demonstrate what they have learned.
- High-stakes assessments are stressful and this can exacerbate many disabilities.
- Instructors should plan to offer a make-up opportunity a week after the initial assessment.
- A significant change in the format of the exam exposes the instructor to the risk of an allegation of discrimination. This includes the prominence of material covered by the exam in the teaching of the course.



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Employee Wellbeing

- Occupational Health & Wellness is for faculty and staff who need accommodation.
- Practice good boundaries around work (time of day, location at home, etc.)
- Eat well, sleep well, and exercise regularly - you'll think more clearly and be more efficient with your time.
- Spend time with loved ones
- Unexpected change is a major stressor
 - Create plans that are reasonably achievable
 - Incorporate flexibility



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Contact Information

wellness.uoguelph.ca

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