



DISABILITY INCLUSION AT CANADIAN UNIVERSITIES: SELECTED EXAMPLES

1) Carleton University, Ottawa, ON

- Carleton offers several courses in Disability Studies as well as an option for a [Disability Studies Minor](#), which offers students an opportunity to study disability as a category of analysis from an interdisciplinary approach. Students are exposed to theories, methodologies, and debates that explore disability from historical, cultural, political, economic, and social perspectives. Examples of areas of research interest include disability and the law, disability and theories of sexuality, disability and policy, disability activism, disability movements (local and transnational), disability and race, and disability in literature and art, to name a few.
- Carleton's [Paul Menton Centre](#) provides a wide variety of services to students with disabilities. These include:
 - Academic accommodations, including both classroom accommodations (audio-recorded lectures, sign language interpretation, note-taking services, provision of materials in alternate formats) and those for tests and exams (extra time or breaks, reduced-distraction environment, assistive technology).
 - Pre-screening for suspected Learning Disability (LD) and/or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).
 - Counselling services (both disability-related and academic).
 - Volunteer transition mentors, who provide academic support for first-year students and facilitate their adjustment to university life.
 - Learning strategists, who meet one-on-one with students with disabilities to help them develop self-awareness, self-advocacy, and individualized learning strategies (which may include the use of assistive technology).
 - Attendant and personal care services for students with physical disabilities living in residence (funded through the Ontario Ministry of Health).
 - Peer tutoring by trained undergraduate and graduate students (this service must be paid for by the students receiving the tutoring).
- Carleton has put into place a [multi-year accessibility plan](#), which helps them implement and monitor their obligations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

- All Carleton University employees and volunteers, regardless of whether they have contact with the public, must complete AODA training.
- In 2014, Carleton University invited David Berman to Carleton University to prepare a series of webinars discussing how to create and maintain accessible websites. They have made these webinars available to staff and faculty to view, and anyone who is responsible for the content of a Carleton University website is strongly encouraged to take the time to familiarize themselves with this material.
- Carleton provides faculty and staff with guides for creating accessible documents, and has a system in place whereby online requests can be made to convert documents from non-accessible formats into accessible ones.
- Carleton has an Employment Equity Program, which has the following dimensions:
 - A standing Presidential Advisory Committee on Equity Policy that monitors and advises on the University's progress toward implementing employment equity.
 - An [Employment Equity Policy](#) within the University's Human Rights Policies and Procedures that commits the University to: 1) the establishment of a diverse work force and a welcoming, supportive environment for all employees; 2) search procedures that include an active search for qualified members from under-represented groups; 3) make all appointments on the basis of merit and where the qualifications of two candidates for appointment are demonstrably equal and where one candidate is a member of an under-represented group, to offer the position to the candidate from the under-represented group; and 4) periodic reviews of criteria for appointment, confirmation, renewal, and tenure and promotion by deans and directors to ensure that the criteria do not undervalue work that is done predominantly by members of under-represented groups.
 - An ongoing employment equity census of all employees covered by the Program to enable the University to gauge its progress toward the establishment of a representative work force;
 - Ongoing training programs of managers and employees regarding their human rights and equity obligations under the University's Human Rights Policies and Procedures;
 - A communications program on what employment equity is and how the University's commitments to diversity strengthen the University community;
 - Periodic reviews of all employment systems.

2) Simon Fraser University, Burnaby/Surrey/Vancouver, BC

- Simon Fraser offers a diploma program in [Rehabilitation and Disability Management](#), in which students learn about accommodations and working with employers to make appropriate and sensitive return-to-work (RTW) decisions. Through courses in rehabilitation, mental health issues, physical medicine and more, students learn how to: 1) accommodate people with disabilities in a unionized or non-unionized environment; 2) understand the role that medical, psychological and ergonomic assessments play in the return-to-work process; and 3) work with an employer to apply the right assessments in the workplace. This is a part-time, in-class program with 8 required courses.
- Simon Fraser offers a [Learning and Developmental Disabilities Minor](#) which, through a combination of education and psychology classes, enhances students' understanding of learning and developmental disabilities and explores an interdisciplinary approach to the health, education and care of infants, children and adults with disabilities.
- Simon Fraser's [Centre for Students with Disabilities](#) provides a wide variety of services to students with disabilities. These include:
 - Academic accommodations, including both classroom accommodations (assistive listening, priority seating, audio-recorded lectures, sign language interpretation, note-taking services, provision of materials in alternate formats) and those for tests and exams (extra time or breaks, reduced-distraction environment, readers/scribes, use of assistive technology or devices).
 - Academic, career and developmental advising and/or referral.
 - Student volunteers who can help students with disabilities with things like doing research, obtaining books from the library, scanning documents, or organizing their work.
 - The Autism Mentorship Initiative, which matches SFU students who have autism or Asperger's with trained student mentors who can provide various types of support, such as help with improving of academic, communication, or interpersonal skills or finding out about activities and resources on campus.
- Simon Fraser has a Physical Access Advisory Committee, whose mandate is to make Simon Fraser a barrier-free university through planning, prioritizing, and recommending projects and activities in support of access.

- Simon Fraser has published a [Physical Access Guide](#), which was created to enhance campus access and to make navigation easier for individuals with mobility difficulties. This resource helps provide a greater awareness regarding accessibility to campus facilities in all buildings, floors and areas on Simon Fraser campuses. The information is intended to: 1) help persons with disabilities determine whether rooms are accessible; 2) provide warning about areas of possible difficulty; and 3) give specific details on the location of rooms, accessible washrooms, elevators, telephones and automatic doors.
- There is a [webpage](#) on the Simon Fraser website that provides a list of links to external career resources that exist specifically for the purpose of matching employers with job-seekers who have disabilities.
- The Simon Fraser Student Society has an Accessibility Fund, which exists to help remove barriers to participation in Student Society activities. Students with disabilities, or any event organizer, can use this fund to increase accessibility at SFSS activities. This includes any meeting or event organized by Departmental Student Unions, SFSS Clubs or the SFSS.
- A committee comprised of representation from faculty, administration, and staff are currently working to develop an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan for Simon Fraser that will aim to increase transparency in job allocation, selection and renewal processes.

3) Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS

- Dalhousie offers a [Certificate in Disability Management](#), which is comprised of four half-credit online university courses. The program is aimed at training students in the effective, efficient and safe co-ordination of services to help injured or ill individuals achieve their maximum level of functioning and ability, and return to work. Those certified in this field may work as disability case managers, insurance case managers, return to work facilitators, vocational rehabilitation consultants, vocational counselors, or employee wellness program administrators.
- Dalhousie's [Student Accessibility Centre](#) provides a wide variety of services to students with disabilities. These include:
 - Academic accommodations, including both classroom accommodations (assistive technology, sign language interpretation, note-taking services, provision of materials in alternate formats) and those for tests and exams (alternative testing conditions, use of assistive technology or devices).

- One-on-one advising to facilitate access to academic courses and programs, facilities, services, and activities.
 - Advocacy on behalf of and alongside students to ease their transition into an academic program.
 - Assistance in accessing disability-related funding.
 - Connection with both on-campus and off-campus resources to enhance success.
- The Dalhousie Student Health & Wellness Centre team includes a professional counsellor who provides screening assessments, learning strategies and advocacy services to students with learning disabilities, ADHD, and Asperger's Disorder.
 - The Dalhousie Student Union offers bursaries of up to \$1000 for students with permanent disabilities (an application is required).
 - Each year, Dalhousie offers ABLE@Dal. This is an orientation program created exclusively for Dalhousie for new students who identify with a disability (and their families). Led by faculty, staff and students, ABLE@Dal focuses on skill development and learning strategies essential to success at Dalhousie. This allows new students an opportunity to meet new and returning students with disabilities, to share experiences, ask questions, and learn more about on-campus supports. After attending, students overwhelmingly report feeling more confident in their ability to access support, and have a better understanding and awareness of the many resources on campus.
 - Dalhousie has [accessibility maps](#) for its campus buildings available online.
 - Dalhousie has an [employment equity policy](#) that seeks to: 1) Remove barriers to and in employment by eliminating or modifying policies, practices, and systems that are not authorized by law; 2) Introduce positive policies and practices, as well as establish internal goals and timetables to achieve employment equity through hiring, training, promotion, and retention of members of equity-seeking groups; 3) Improve the meaningful participation and engagement of equity-seeking groups throughout Dalhousie; and 4) Improve workplace environments and climate for equity-seeking groups through individual and organizational capacity building and ensuring timely responses to complaints of inequitable systems and practices. There is an Employment Equity Council that is responsible for providing advice on the strategic planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of this policy.
 - Dalhousie conducts an annual employment equity census.

4) Memorial University, St. John's, NL

- Memorial offers at least one course with a specific focus on disability. Sociology of Disability examines the social construction of disability, and explores the intersection of disability, disability studies, and disability activism with major areas of sociological focus that often fail to address disability (e.g. race, gender, work, sexuality, identity, globalization and knowledge production). By critically unpacking concepts of 'accommodation', 'inclusivity' and 'accessibility', this course explores how constructions/discourses of disability shape our social world and ways of knowing.
- Memorial University's Faculty of Education offers a [Bachelor of Special Education](#) program that is available to students who already hold a prior degree in education. It is a 36 credit hour professional program that can be completed through either part-time or full-time study and it is aimed at teachers who want to specialize in accommodating all types of learner diversity and exceptionality in the school system. This includes gifted learners and learners with mental health issues as well as those with physical, intellectual, and learning disabilities. The program incorporates a strong focus on universal design for learning.
- Memorial's [Glenn Roy Blundon Centre](#) provides academic accommodation and support for students with disabilities. Its services include:
 - An online system that students can use to request classroom or exam accommodations.
 - Support for faculty in making their classrooms more accessible and integrating the principles of universal design for learning into their course design and pedagogical practices.
 - Advice for administrative and support staff on how to enhance inclusivity for on-campus events as well as new programs and/or resources.
- Memorial's Student Wellness and Counselling Centre has recently introduced a new gaming room that is aimed at providing a safe space on campus for students with autism spectrum disabilities to spend time relaxing and playing games with their peers. All students are free to use this space, meaning that it is not necessary for students to disclose a particular disability in order to access it. The Centre also provides peer-to-peer tutoring, as well as academic and behavioural support, to students who need it and has a system in place for tracking students and engaging in weekly check-ins in cases where that is necessary or desired.
- Memorial's Residence Life Office provides free mental health first aid training to all interested faculty, staff and students.

- Memorial supposedly has a campus physical accessibility guide that provides information on accessible routes, entrances, and other facilities for people with mobility, hearing, visual, and other disabilities. (According to the MUN website, this exists, but it's interesting to note that the link is broken.)
- Memorial strives to meet and exceed web content accessibility guidelines for its websites.
- There are a wide range of assistive technology resources available at Memorial University Libraries. The QEII library currently has five assistive technology stations, plus an entire room that is solely devoted to assistive technology. Absolutely anyone is free to book and use these assistive technology spaces, and there is a variety of technology available including text-to-speech programs, screen readers, smart pens, iPads, and hand-held scanners. There are also library staff members who have expertise in using these technologies, and tutorials and peer-to-peer help are readily available to anyone who needs it.
- Memorial has an Employment Equity and Diversity Advisory Committee (EEDAC), which has been guiding the development of a new three-year Employment Equity and Diversity Plan for the university. The over-arching goal of this plan will be to help Memorial attract and retain more diverse employees, including those with disabilities. Once approved, EEDAC will review annual status reports with respect to progress of the Plan and provide appropriate advice.
- Memorial has an online Employment Equity Self-Identification Survey that can be voluntarily completed by employees.