

Faculty of Education – Field Experiences Accommodation Policy for Persons with Disabilities

This policy applies to applicants seeking undergraduate admission to the Faculty of Education and current undergraduate students in the Faculty of Education.

The Faculty of Education supports the principle of accommodation and all reasonable efforts to meet the disability-related needs of our students. In collaboration with Specialized Support and Disability Services (SSDS), the Faculty of Education endeavors to play a leadership role in instituting practices that maximize inclusion and participation of students with disabilities.

Duty to Accommodate: This term describes the legal obligation to address or correct situations of discrimination by providing reasonable accommodation. A duty to accommodate is part of the University's larger duty not to discriminate on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, ancestry, religious beliefs, colour, marital status, age, place of origin, family status, source of income or political belief. Accommodation of students with disabilities involves activities like making adjustments or alternate arrangements in the educational environment to ensure it does not have a discriminatory effect on a student because of a student's disabilities.

Physical and mental disabilities include but are not limited to:

- Hearing disabilities
- Mobility disabilities
- Psychological and psychiatric disabilities
- Vision disabilities
- Learning disabilities
- Neurological disabilities
- Disabilities related to chronic health problems
- Disabilities as a result of serious illness such as cancer
- Developmental disabilities which include Autism Spectrum Disorders

Accommodation: Accommodation is any change made to an employment, education, or housing rule, standard, policy, practice, or environment which enables a member of a group against whom discrimination is prohibited, to enjoy equal opportunities with others.

Discrimination does not always give rise to a duty to accommodate. In some limited circumstances, the discrimination will be "reasonable and justifiable" and no accommodation will be required. The duty to accommodate extends only to the point of undue hardship. Undue hardship has been interpreted to mean undue expense or excessive disruption of or interference with the business or operation. In assessing undue hardship, relevant factors include:

- financial costs
- business or institutional convenience/efficiency
- disruption to the public
- the effect or impact on the rights, health, safety or morale of others
- interchangeability of the work force or of the facility
- size and resources of the institution
- health and safety considerations including the nature and magnitude of the risk and the identity of those who bear it

The duty to accommodate does not require the University or Faculty to modify admission or educational program requirements where the integrity of the educational standards of the University or its degrees would be compromised. To do so would amount to undue hardship. Accommodation does not relieve the student of responsibility to develop and demonstrate the essential skills and competencies expected and required of all students in meeting the requirements of the BEd Degree program. This includes developing and demonstrating the essential skills and competencies expected and required of all BEd students in field experience placements.

The Faculty is committed to accommodating students admitted into our BEd programs to the point of undue hardship.

The Faculty through Undergraduate Student Services (USS) is responsible for facilitating accommodation in field experiences. However, the duty to accommodate is ultimately a shared responsibility between the student seeking accommodation, the University, and the Faculty of Education.

Policy and direction for accommodating students with disabilities has been provided by the Alberta Human Rights and Citizen Commission, the GFC Policy Manual, Specialized Support and Disability Services, and the Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights.

Roles and Responsibilities

Student Teachers requiring accommodation are responsible for:

1. Arranging an initial consultation with SSDS to evaluate their eligibility for reasonable accommodations in a field experience. Upon referral from SSDS they are responsible for initiating a meeting with USS to review the request for accommodations and formalize a field experience accommodation plan one term prior to the planned field experience.
2. Approaching SSDS in a timely manner to arrange for disability-related funding which can be applied towards the costs of accommodation provision.
3. Providing sufficient, relevant and timely documentation to SSDS including medical reports and other materials as are required to verify the need for accommodation and for identifying the student teacher's specific accommodation needs. The documentation of disability should be provided by a physician or other treating professional and should address how the student teacher's disability impacts on his or her ability to participate in a field experiences placement. It is the student teacher's responsibility to ensure that the documentation on file is up to date and accurately represents the disability needs which will require accommodation in a field placement.
4. Providing the documentation in support of an accommodation to SSDS as close as possible to the time that the accommodation request is made. Failure to ultimately provide relevant and timely documentation in support of a request for accommodation may result in SSDS, in collaboration with the Faculty, being unable to provide reasonable accommodation.
5. Cooperating in, searching for, implementing and evaluating a reasonable accommodation.

6. Accepting the practical limitations of reasonable accommodations. While reasonable accommodation is intended to respond to relevant disability-related needs, the term does not imply a perfect solution.

Specialized Support and Disability Services is responsible for:

1. Reviewing the Field Experiences Placement Accommodation Request Form, the medical reports and other documentation provided in support of the request.
2. Requesting from the student teacher seeking the accommodation whatever additional medical or other information, which, in SSDS's opinion, may be reasonably necessary to confirm the need for an accommodation and to identify sufficiently that student teacher's specific needs.

The Faculty of Education is responsible for:

1. Considering the specific needs of the student teacher, in consultation with SSDS and the student teacher, to determine what reasonable accommodation can be made, short of undue hardship, and, to this end, developing an Accommodation Plan (attached as Appendix "B").
2. Seeking advice, assistance or input from resources within and outside the university community, as necessary.
3. Providing reasonable accommodation, in cooperation with SSDS and the student teacher, to the extent required by law.
4. Keeping clear written records relating to the accommodation process.
5. Providing the details of reasonable accommodation to those who need to know in order to facilitate the accommodation request, while respecting FOIP guidelines regarding the sharing of confidential information.

Examples of Accommodations in a Field Experience

Policy and Regulations

The Faculty's regulations for Field Experiences are contained in the Education section of the University Calendar and the field experiences website, www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/fieldexperiences. The Field Experiences website provides specific information about student teaching and outlines what is expected of student teachers. All student teachers are expected to access and review the Field Experiences website before the beginning of the field experiences within the (Introductory Professional Term ("IPT") and Advanced Professional Term ("APT")).

In determining the type of accommodation required and to facilitate the development of an accommodation plan a needs assessment in a field experiences setting (classroom environment) or a functional capacity assessment may be arranged. Any arrangement and participation of the student teacher seeking accommodation in a needs or functional capacity assessment is solely for accommodation needs evaluation purposes and data collection and

does not constitute an attempt at a field experience. Student teachers will not receive credit towards formal practicum experience while participating in a needs or functional capacity assessment.

Potential warranted accommodations to policy and regulations might include:

- Student teachers being placed in schools they have attended as a student within the last 5 years.
- Student teachers being placed in the same school environment for their IPT and APT placements.

Program Requirements

Field Experience placements are usually made in both the Fall and Winter terms. Student teachers are expected to register full time while doing their student teaching during the professional terms. There are 14 full time weeks of required student teaching; five weeks in the IPT and nine weeks in the APT.

The student teacher's schedule may be altered to accommodate transportation requirements, and/or health requirements, e.g. fatigue, where the need for the same is supported by adequate and timely documentation of disability. Any deviation from full-time student teaching does not relieve the student teacher of the requirement for 14 full student teaching weeks during the two professional terms. Student teachers seeking accommodation must still complete the requisite number of teaching weeks, but may have their student teaching period extended to ensure that the requisite number of weeks is completed. Changes to the student teaching schedule may restrict a student teacher's field experience to a Winter Term.

Student Teaching Evaluation

A student teacher's ability in a particular area will be assessed by a standard appropriate for a student teacher. Student teacher evaluation in an IPT field experience verifies that sufficient competence has been demonstrated to advance to the next professional term. Emphasis for evaluation of the APT field experience is on verification that a student teacher possesses and has sufficiently demonstrated the knowledge, skills and attributes of a teacher who is pre-service. Although the evaluative process may be altered to accommodate a student teacher's needs, student teachers being accommodated in a field experience are assessed with the same evaluative criteria and standards as all other student teachers undertaking field placements.

Physical Environment

Field Experience placements are made in schools and with mentor teachers who volunteer to take student teachers from the University of Alberta, Faculty of Education BEd Degree program. Student teachers from the Faculty of Education are "guests" of the school and district. The Faculty will work with mentor teachers, schools and districts to facilitate and make accommodation to the physical environment (classroom) up to the point that the mentor teacher, school, district, or Faculty believes such accommodation would disrupt the learning process; pose health and safety concerns for students in the classroom or for the student teacher seeking accommodation; or would otherwise constitute undue hardship.

Accommodations to the physical environment may include but are not limited to:

- Arranging classroom furniture to provide easy and efficient physical access for instruction and supervision to a student teacher using a wheelchair or other mobility aides and also to facilitate interaction between the student teacher and the students in the classroom.
- Placing student teachers in schools with accessible washroom facilities, ramps and/or lifts.
- Supporting the use of devices and adaptive technologies, e.g., computers, projectors, voice projection/amplification.

Intermediaries

Health and safety concerns for the student teacher or for the students in the classroom may warrant the use of an intermediary (Teacher Assistant) in the classroom. USS, in consultation with the mentor teacher, the student teacher and SSDS, will determine if the use of an intermediary is warranted in the circumstances. It is the responsibility of the mentor teacher and the student teacher to outline duties of the teacher assistant. The utilization of a teacher assistant, or any other intermediary, must not prevent the student teacher from developing and demonstrating core competencies and essential qualifications of the program. The document “Building Collaborative Teams, Roles and Responsibilities of Teachers and Teacher Assistants” a joint publication of Edmonton Public Teachers and Edmonton Public Schools may serve as a framework in defining the role of the teacher assistant in the field experience.

Accommodations related to intermediaries may include but are not limited to:

- Teacher Assistant
- Scribe/note taker
- Sign Language Interpreter
- Helper/companion animals

Human Resources Strategies

Depending on the student teacher’s disability-related needs, modifications may involve human resources strategies such as changes to schedules, classroom location, or task sharing. Examples of accommodation strategies typical for the employment setting include frequent breaks for medication, working in an accessible location, or an individualized work schedule.

Devices / Adaptive Technology

Devices and adaptive technology may be applied in the classroom for student teaching and for meeting the core competencies and essential qualifications of the field experience. Where devices/adaptive technology are applied, the student teacher requiring accommodation must demonstrate proficiency of said devices/adaptive technology for identified tasks or competencies prior to a field experience placement. Both the student teacher’s proficiency with the devices/adaptive technology and the criteria used to determine the student teacher’s proficiency will be determined by SSDS, the Faculty, and the mentor teacher.

Accommodation devices / adaptive technology may include but are not limited to the use of:

- LCD projector
- Digital tape recorder or other recording device
- Portable FM amplification system
- Presentation software, e.g. Microsoft Powerpoint

- Laptop computer
- Portable dictionary/thesaurus (e.g., Language Master)
- Computer with scanner and appropriate screen reading program
- Closed circuit television
- Speaker phone
- Voice recognition software

The Accommodation Process

1. Student teachers seeking accommodation are required to initiate the process of identifying the type and extent of accommodation required for the field experience.
2. Student teachers seeking accommodation in a field experience must review the *Faculty of Education – Field Experiences Accommodation Policy for Persons with Disabilities*.
3. Student teachers seeking accommodation in a field experience will review support services available through SSDS and USS.
4. Student teachers seeking accommodation will submit a *Field Experiences Placement Accommodation Request Form* (Appendix “A”) directly to the field placement liaison in SSDS, with evidence of the need for accommodation. Timely, written documentation of disability from a physician or other appropriate professional is required. The documentation will describe how a student teacher’s disability will impact on his or her ability to participate in a field experience placement.
5. A needs assessment conducted by SSDS and/or a functional capacity assessment conducted by an occupational therapist may also be requested at the time by the Faculty or student teacher. Requests should be submitted as early as possible and no later than a term prior to the planned field experience.
6. The student teacher, the Faculty’s Director of Student Support, the field placement liaison in SSDS, and the Assistant Dean Field Experiences or designate will meet to review the accommodation needs identified and define the next steps in developing the accommodation plan. When considering what is needed to provide the necessary accommodation, the parties will consider any recommendations made by the physician or other appropriate professional in the written documentation of disability. However, the decision as to what accommodation is ultimately provided will be made by the Faculty in consultation with SSDS and the student teacher. At the meeting, the requirement for a needs assessment and/or functional capacity assessment in a field experience setting, to assist in identifying or better defining the accommodations required, will also be determined. If it is decided a needs assessment is required, the objectives, timing, and duration are to be determined.
7. USS, SSDS, and the student teacher develop a *Field Experience Placement Accommodation Plan* (Appendix “B”).
8. The *Field Experience Placement Accommodation Plan* is reviewed with the student teacher, field placement liaison in SSDS, and other vested parties to ensure the student teacher’s needs and that of the BEd degree are addressed.
9. The student teacher must demonstrate the defined proficiency(ies) in the use of the determined devices/adaptive technology **prior** to the field experience.
10. Prior to the field experience, the Faculty will coordinate a meeting with all vested parties to review the accommodation plan and expectations. Inherent in the accommodation plan will be that the student teacher will maintain contact with USS and SSDS and bring any concerns or problems with their accommodated field placement to the attention of USS in a timely manner.
11. The student teacher, field placement liaison in SSDS, and Director of Student Support review and complete the *Accommodation Checklist* (Appendix “C”).

Appendix A: Accommodation Request Form



**Faculty of Education
University of Alberta**

FIELD EXPERIENCES PLACEMENT ACCOMMODATION REQUEST FORM

Date: _____

Name: _____

ID #: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

Accommodation for:

EDFX Course: _____ Fall 20____ Winter 20____

Major: _____ Minor: _____

In preparation for this request I have: (Please check each box to acknowledge completion)

- reviewed and understand the Faculty of Education Field Experiences Accommodation Policy available at the Undergraduate Student Services Office, 1-107 Education North, or on the Field Experiences web site, <http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/fieldexperiences/>
- reviewed and understand the student teacher information section and the Field Experiences Placement Policy on the Field Experiences web site, <http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/fieldexperiences/>
- reviewed and understand the Faculty of Education Regulations for Field Experience Courses section in the University of Alberta Calendar.
- attached verification of disability supporting this Accommodation Request (e.g. timely, written documentation of disability from a physician or other appropriate treating professional) if not already on file.

Please outline your current understanding of the challenges your disability(ies) will present in the placement setting and corresponding accommodations you may require. (If you require assistance determining how your disability(ies) may impact your responsibilities in a field experience placement, please consult with the Director of Student Support and/or Specialized Support and Disability Services prior to completing this form.)

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(Attach additional pages if required)

Accommodation does not relieve the student teacher of responsibility to develop and demonstrate essential skills and competencies expected and required of all student teachers in a field experience in meeting the requirements of the BEd Degree program.

I certify that the information in this form is true and complete.

Student Teacher's Signature

Date

Personal information on this form is collected under the authority of Section 33(c) of Alberta's *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* for the Faculty of Education's Duty to Accommodate Students with Disabilities in a Field Experience (student teaching) placement, and may be disclosed to academic and administrative units associated with and in support of the field experience placement process. For details on the use of this information, call the Director of Student Support at (780) 492-2638.

Appendix B: Accommodation Plan



**Faculty of Education
University of Alberta**

Field Experience Placement
Accommodation Plan

Date: _____

Student Teacher's Name: _____ ID #: _____

Accommodation for:

EDFX Course: _____ Fall 20____ Winter 20____

Major: _____ Minor: _____

The Faculty of Education, Field Experiences aims to remove or reduce barriers to the student teacher's success arising from their disability through the provision of reasonable accommodation in the field experience (student teaching) environment. The provision of reasonable accommodation does not relieve the student teacher of responsibility to develop and demonstrate essential skills and competencies expected and required of all student teachers in a field experience in meeting the requirements of the BEd Degree program.

This Plan outlines the Faculty of Education, Field Experiences, and SSDS recommendations for reasonable accommodation based on the information and accompanying documentation presented by the student teacher.

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1. Needs Assessment in a field experience setting required: Yes No
If yes,
 - A. Objectives:
 - B. Timing:
 - C. Duration:
 2. Functional Capacity Assessment required: Yes No
If yes,
 - A. Objectives:
 - B. Timing:
 - C. Duration:
 3. Accommodation to Program Requirements (e.g., student teaching scheduling structure) required: Yes No

4. Accommodation to Physical Environment required Yes No
5. Support of Intermediary required: Yes No
 If yes,
 A. Funding initiated / secured:
 B. Resources arranged / secured:
 C. Expectations and responsibilities defined:
6. Accommodation to Human Resources Strategies required: Yes No
7. Devices / Adaptive Technology required: Yes No
 If yes, list type / nature and required proficiency of application.

Device/AT required	Purpose	Individual/Organization Responsible for Providing Assistive Technology

8. Next Steps:

- a. Set follow-up meeting to gain agreement / consensus on accommodation plan.
- i. Date: _____
 - ii. Time: _____
 - iii. Location: _____
 - iv. Attendees: _____
- b. Arrange Needs Assessment in a field experience setting.
- i. Responsibility: _____
 - ii. Date: _____
- c. Follow up on Intermediary Resources.
- i. Responsibility: _____
 - ii. Date: _____
- d. Follow up on Devices / Adaptive Technologies.
- i. Responsibility: _____
 - ii. Date: _____

The accommodation process is a collaborative effort and a shared responsibility of the student teacher, Faculty, and Specialized Support and Disability Services (SSDS).

The Field Experience Placement Accommodation Plan has been reviewed and discussed with next steps identified:

Date: _____.

Student Teacher: _____

Printed Name

Signature

Director Student Support: _____

Printed Name

Signature

SSDS Advisor: _____

Printed Name

Signature

Mentor Teacher: _____

Printed Name

Signature

Appendix C: Accommodation Checklist

- _____ request letter from student teacher submitted
- _____ supporting documentation / SSDS assessment submitted
- _____ type and extent of accommodation defined
- _____ field experience accommodation defined
- _____ pre-placement assessment determined and planned
- _____ accommodation plan reviewed with student teacher
- _____ accommodation implementation plan with responsibilities and timelines developed
- _____ student teacher proficiency with devices / adaptive technology assessed and acceptable
- _____ field experience placement arranged

Resources on Campus:

Reasonable Accommodation Policy: Section 44.8, GFC Policy Manual

<http://www.ualberta.ca/~unisecr/policy/44sec.pdf>

Policy for Students with Disabilities: Section 108.5, GFC Policy Manual

<http://www.ualberta.ca/~unisecr/policy/sec108.html#5>

Services on Campus:

Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights

<http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/humanrights/>
Specialized Support and Disability Services

<http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/SSDS/>