



VANCOUVER ISLAND
UNIVERSITY

COWICHAN

cowichan.viu.ca/support-services

Accessibility Services

Welcoming, valuing, and supporting students with a disability

Welcome to VIU

Accessibility Services' mission is to work collaboratively with the campus community to create an accessible academic learning environment for students with disabilities attending Vancouver Island University.

The Accessibility Services Office provides information, support services, and reasonable accommodation in all programs to students with documented permanent and temporary disabilities ranging from attention deficit, learning disabilities, chronic health issues, hearing and visual impairments, physical disabilities, psychiatric disabilities, and temporary impairments due to accident, illness or injury.

All students with disabilities are encouraged to register with the office. Access to most services and programs provided by Accessibility Services is restricted to students who have registered with Accessibility Services.

Documentation

Services are available to students who have certified documentation.

A **permanent disability** means a functional limitation caused by a physical or mental impairment that restricts the ability of a person to perform the daily activities necessary to participate in studies at a post-secondary level or in the labour force and is expected to remain with the person for the person's expected natural life.

Acceptable documentation must be current (within 5 years):

- [Verification of Permanent Disability form](#) Appendix 8 from StudentAidBC (Section 4 to be filled out by physician)
- Ophthalmologist Report
- Psychiatric Report
- Audiologist Report
- Psychological Report
- Psycho-Educational Report

A **temporary disability** is a short-term disability, injury or illness. The documentation should indicate the nature of the disability, anticipated duration, and the services which would be most appropriate.

- [Temporary Disability Form](#) for the physician to complete

Reimbursement of 75% of the cost of one diagnostic assessment for learning disabilities *may* be available to an enrolled student with approval of Student Aid BC.

The following list gives you an idea about some of the categories.

- Chronic Health
- Cognitive
- Hearing
- Mental Health
- Multiple
- Neurological
- Physical
- Visual
- ADHD

Multiple Disabilities

Multiple simultaneous conditions which may or may not be related. For example, a student may have permanent arthritis and also be legally blind.

PHONE NUMBERS AND INTERNET SITES

Web: cowichan.viu.ca/support-services/services-students-disabilities
 Email: accessibilityservices.cowichan@viu.ca
 Accessibility Services, Cowichan 250.746.3509
 Cowichan Campus Welcome Centre 250.746.3500

Nanaimo Campus automated switchboard 1.888.920.2221
 Accessibility Services, Nanaimo local 6446
 Advising Email advising.cowichan@viu.ca
 Student Loans & Grants StudentAidBC.ca

STUDENT AFFAIRS

ABORIGINAL | ACCESSIBILITY | ADVISING | ASSESSMENTS | COUNSELLING | FINANCIAL AID | LEARNING CENTRE | TUTORS

2011 University Way, Duncan | British Columbia, Canada | V9L 0C7
ph (250) 746-3509 | fax (250) 746-3559

STEPS FOR NEW STUDENTS...PLAN EARLY

1. Consider a Career Plan

If you are working with an outside agency you may want to start your plan with them:

- Global Vocational Services: (250) 748-9880 www.globalvocationalservices.com
- [Canadian National Institute for the Blind](#) (CNIB) 1-888-572-2233 (service for vision disabilities)
- [Island Deaf and Hard of Hearing Centre](#) (IDHHC) 250-753-0999 (service for hearing disabilities)

2. See an Advisor

Connect with [Student Affairs](#) at Cowichan Campus, Vancouver Island University: call 250-746-3509 or email advising.cowichan@viu.ca to plan career possibilities. Bring any career plan options you have already worked on. Review [7 Steps to Connect](#).

3. Apply to your VIU Program

Fill out and submit [Application for Admission](#) to Vancouver Island University before program deadline date.

4. Make Appointment with Accessibility Services 6 - 8 weeks before term starts.

Call Student Affairs (250)746-3509 to make an appointment or email accessibilityservices.cowichan@viu.ca.

5. Documentation

Documentation must be from a qualified professional (medical doctor, psychiatrist, psychologist, audiologist, etc.), and be dated within the last 5 years. If you have documentation of your disability bring this to your Access Specialist appointment. We will discuss necessary documentation at this time.

6. Pay your Tuition Fees

Explore [Financial Aid](#) options ... how will you pay for school?

7. Communicate with Instructors

Give your instructors your Accommodation Letter. Discuss your accommodations with your instructors at the beginning of each new semester.

[What the Professor Needs to Know \(4:29 minute video\)](#)

8. Check-in with Accessibility Services

Keep Accessibility Services informed of any new developments, or any changes to your health or disability. You will need to make an appointment to see an Access Specialist before each term begins.

ACCOMMODATION

In accordance with the Human Rights Code, a student with a documented disability may be entitled to reasonable accommodation upon request. An assessment, conducted by a certified expert in the specific field, will determine what accommodation is required.

What is it?

An accommodation is an arrangement that is put in place to support a student with a disability. Accommodations are provided to "level the playing field" for the student. Students are expected to achieve the same learning outcomes and standards as everyone else. The accommodation ensures that each student has the chance to demonstrate their real ability.

How do students get accommodation?

- Call Accessibility Services office 250-746-3509 **six to eight weeks before** classes start, to book an appointment.
- Bring current documentation (not older than 5 years).
- The Accessibility Services Office will

work with the student to determine if they meet the qualifications for accommodation and identify the type of accommodation for studies.

- Accommodation is based on documented need. A student will only be eligible for accommodation that addresses the challenges caused by their disability.

Who needs to know?

Accessibility Services

The student and the Accessibility Specialist will review the documentation together to determine the accommodation based on the disability and the academic requirements.

Once you, the student, have met with Accessibility Services and determined your accommodation needs a confidential letter of notification will be prepared to inform your instructors of your accommodation. The nature of your disability is not disclosed.

- This letter is valid for a period of one year from the preparation date.
- This letter verifies that you are registered with Accessibility Services

and that you are entitled to academic accommodation.

- The letter outlines your classroom and exam needs.
- Your instructors will not receive info about your disability. They simply need to know that you are registered with Accessibility Services. You do not have to disclose or discuss your disability.

Once the letter is prepared you should:

- Set up a private office hour meeting with each of your instructors.
- Introduce yourself and review your accommodation letter.
- Discuss your accommodation needs.
- Communicate any difficulties you have with learning.
- Come to an agreement about how accommodation will be provided.

The success of your semester will be enhanced if you communicate regularly with your instructors and Accessibility Services.

They are your partners in education.