
Standard Number:	5011	Effective Date:	Jan 1, 2024
Standard Title:	Accessibility	Last Updated:	Dec 5, 2023
Standard Category:	Human Resources	Next Review Date:	Jul, 2025

Purpose

Ridge Meadows College is committed to the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion and strives to create educational opportunities for all members of the community. The college is aware of its responsibilities under the BC Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act and works to ensure equal access and participation for people with diverse needs.

This standard outlines Ridge Meadows College’s support systems for the integration and equality of students with diverse needs.

Definitions

Accommodations: identifying and implementing reasonable adjustments and/or auxiliary aids, and/or modifying practices, procedures or facilities in response to a diverse need requiring an accommodation up to the point of Undue Hardship for the college.

Diverse Abilities: Any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication, or sensory impairment or a functional limitation whether permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, evident or not, that in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person’s full and equal participation in society.

Undue Hardship: factors considered when assessing whether a given accommodation is reasonable or not. The assessment must consider, among others, the burden on the college’s financial and material resources, as well as the impact of the college’s operation, security, safety and rights of others.

Work: visual material: whether by hand, computer, mathematical equation, musical or artworks; oral material; individual or group reports and presentations; audio visual material and any other medium submitted to an instructor for the purposes of grading.

Statement

Ridge Meadows College is committed to serving all students equitably including those with diverse abilities. Learning and facility accommodations may be made in the following manners:

Identification

It is the responsibility of students with diverse abilities in need of accommodations to identify their needs to an appropriate staff member of the college. Students may choose to:

- Self-identify on the college application form
- Report any special requirements or unique needs to their instructor(s), program chair, and/or college administrator

Intersectionality

The college is a diverse community and every effort to address accessibility must be grounded in an understanding that each person's experience is impacted by many factors. The college recognizes that a person's perspective or circumstance (such as ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, religion, immigration status, language ability and/or socio-economic factors) could impact their needs, options and choices. The college also recognizes that systemic oppression, including, but not limited to, sexism, racism, colonialism, ableism, homophobia and/or transphobia, can impact the accommodation and/or resources a student with diverse abilities may feel comfortable to request. The needs of each student vary, and corresponding consideration will be taken regarding the types and forms of support and accommodation.

Communication

1. Staff are trained to communicate with people who have diverse abilities in a professional, dignified, and equitable manner.
2. Upon request, students with diverse abilities may be offered alternative communication formats. Such formats may include:
 - a. Allowing a translator or communications support person to attend courses with the student
 - b. Allowing a student to complete assignments in alternative ways (such as completing a written assignment orally or vice-versa)
 - c. Adapt administrative communication to meet a student's request – such as communicating exclusively via email or phone
 - d. Allowing or providing assistive devices
3. Students will be informed of any temporary disruption that may prevent the student from having access to their support system. Whenever possible, alternative arrangements will be made.

Assistive Devices

The college will make every reasonable effort to ensure that students with diverse abilities can use their personal assistive devices to access services or assist them with course work. In cases where an assistive device may not be feasible or may put the student or other individuals at the college at risk, alternative options will be explored.

It is the responsibility of the student to ensure their assistive device is operated safely at all times.

Use of Service Animals or Support Persons

Service animals are permitted on campus in accordance with provincial legislation. In cases where service animals are not legally permitted – such as food prep areas – alternative arrangements will be investigated.

Support person(s) are welcome to accompany students with diverse abilities and support them as necessary. At no time will a student be prevented from having access to their support person(s) while on campus.

Facilities

The college is committed to ensuring its facilities are as accessible as possible. Based upon feedback from students and other members of the public, the college will endeavor to improve facility access whenever there is an opportunity to do so.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Personal information concerning a student or prospective student's diverse needs is held in the strictest confidence and will not be shared without prior consent.

Planning

Upon request or self-identification, the student and their program chair will communicate to establish a personalized plan to accommodate any diverse abilities. Personalized plans may be limited and informal or documented in detail depending upon the needs of the student and accommodations that are required.

Related Standards

- 4006: Student Code of Conduct
- 5005: Employee Conduct
- 5007: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
- 5008: Respectful Treatment
- 5009: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity or Expression