

PCLS Student Accommodations & Accessibility Protocol

2017

General

1. This Protocol has been adopted in accordance with section 32 of the 2017 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between PCLS and Osgoode.
2. In the event of conflicts between this Protocol and the MOU, the MOU shall take precedence.
3. In the event of conflicts between this Protocol and the Academic Rules at Osgoode, the Academic Rules shall take precedence.

Purpose

4. Osgoode and PCLS are committed to accessible and inclusive learning environments. The purpose of the Protocol is to describe processes for implementing this commitment for the Intensive Program in Poverty Law, including processes for obtaining accommodations on medical, compassionate, or equitable grounds.

Application

5. The Protocol applies to students enrolled in the Intensive Program in Poverty Law, during the academic term in which they are participating in the program. For greater clarity, the Protocol does not apply to PCLS employees during their term of employment at PCLS.
6. The Protocol does not apply to the academic seminar that accompanies the clinical component of the Intensive Program in Poverty Law. Details regarding the academic seminar can be found in the course syllabus.

Universal Design

7. Osgoode and PCLS will strive to implement principles of universal design to enhance the accessibility of the Intensive Program in Poverty Law for all students, regardless of whether students are registered with York University as requiring accommodations.
8. When changes are contemplated to PCLS policies and practices or to the Intensive Program in Poverty Law, attention will be accorded to whether these changes enhance universal accessibility for PCLS students. Major changes will include consultations with someone knowledgeable in disability matters.

Grounds for Accommodations

9. PCLS students may request reasonable accommodations on medical (including mental-health), compassionate or equitable grounds that would have a significant impact on their performance in the Poverty Law Intensive.

Accommodations in the Student Selection Process

10. PCLS and Osgoode will ensure that the application and student selection processes for the Poverty Law Intensive are accessible to all students. Students requiring accommodations in the application or selection processes should contact the Academic Director or the Assistant Dean (Students).

11. A statement about Osgoode's and PCLS's commitment to inclusive and accessible learning environments, as well as information about how students can obtain accommodations in the application or selection processes shall be included in promotional materials for the Intensive Program in Poverty Law.

Requests for Accommodations: Early Notice

12. Osgoode and PCLS will strive to proactively identify and plan for accommodations needs as early as possible after students are admitted to the Poverty Law Intensive, while recognizing that some accommodations needs may not arise until after the Intensive is underway.
13. Students who anticipate that they will require accommodations during their term in the Poverty Law Intensive should request accommodations as early as possible.
14. Students who are uncertain about whether they will require accommodations are encouraged to spend time at PCLS in advance of their term to observe workflow practices and to speak with their supervising staff and the Academic Director to identify possible areas of concern. Students need not disclose a need (or potential need) for accommodations to set up such visits, as all students are encouraged to visit the clinic in advance of their terms.
15. Correspondence sent to students when they accept positions in the Intensive Program in Poverty Law shall include details about accommodations processes, as well as a statement of Osgoode's and PCLS's commitment to inclusive and accessible learning environments.

Requests for Accommodations: Process

16. Requests for accommodations can be made
 - a. to the Academic Director;
 - b. to the Assistant Dean (Students); or,
 - c. to the student's disability counsellor at York's Counselling and Disability Services (CDS).
17. It is the student's decision as which of these three options they prefer for initiating discussions of accommodations needs. However, in some instances, effective planning will point to the importance of including the Assistant Dean (Students) and/or the Academic Director to develop and implement the accommodation plan.
18. Where the accommodation plan requires modifications to practices at PCLS, the Academic Director will serve as the main contact point at PCLS for developing and implementing the accommodations plan. The Academic Director may need to work with relevant PCLS staff, such as the Clinic Director and supervisory staff, to develop and implement the accommodation plan. This will only occur with the advance consent of the student, and information will only be shared with PCLS staff on an "as needed" basis. In no event will this require the sharing of medical diagnosis or assessment with PCLS staff.
19. As per Osgoode's Academic Rules, requests for accommodations must be
 - a. made in writing;
 - b. made as soon as possible after the need for the accommodation arises; and,

c. accompanied by supporting documentation.

Accommodations: Modifications to Accommodations

20. Once accommodations are in place, students are encouraged to promptly notify the Academic Director, the Assistant Dean (Students) or their disability counsellor at CDS if adjustments are necessary.
21. It is recognized that because the legal clinic environment is new to many students, and given that many students' needs are dynamic, adjustments may often be necessary.
22. Where the accommodations are known to the Academic Director, an opportunity to review the accommodations arrangements shall be included in the mid-semester formative evaluation process.

Accommodations: Appeals

23. Where an agreement cannot be reached on the accommodations plan or the implementation of the plan, the Associate Dean (Students) shall be consulted.

Accommodations: Costs

24. Where accommodations involve costs to PCLS, the Dean (or the Dean's Designate) shall be advised and shall be provided with a detailed budget.
25. Where the Dean (or the Dean's designate) approves the accommodations, Osgoode will reimburse PCLS for costs set out in the budget.
26. Where the Dean (or the Dean's designate) does not approve the accommodations, the Dean (or the Dean's designate) will work with the Academic Director to develop an alternative accommodations plan. Osgoode will bear the costs (if any) of implementing the alternative plan.
27. Students may be required to make reasonable efforts to apply for bursaries for which they may be eligible to defray costs of an accommodations plan.

Further Information

28. The Academic Director is available to provide advice and further information about accommodations in the Intensive Program.

Revisions to Protocol

29. As per the MOU, revisions to the PCLS Student Accommodations & Accessibility Protocol require the consent of the Academic Director, the Clinic Director and the Dean (or the Dean's designate). PCLS students and staff shall also be consulted prior to changes to the Protocol.