

MOVING ON: Transitioning to College of the North Atlantic

Accessibility Services Newsletter for High Schools

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Welcome to Accessibility Services: We Have Changed Our Name!

After much discussion and research, and in keeping with a growing trend, College of the North Atlantic has decided to change the name of Disability Services to Accessibility Services (AS).

Language evolves. It changes with the passing of time, cultural trends, and acquisition of new information. Today, the term 'disability' focuses on the ability that is absent, not the ability that is present. More students with a wider variety of issues impacting their learning are seeking our services. To encompass the types of issues which these students face, 'disability' is an out-of-date term. Furthermore, the stigmatizing term 'disability' can prevent students from availing of the assistance that they could utilize. The term 'accessibility', however, does not focus on what is absent in the students' skills and is less stigmatizing; therefore, they may be more inclined to seek services that can help make their post-secondary experiences more positive and successful.

Disclosure: If Students Do Not Tell Us, We Do Not Know

Look at the application students are filling in to come to CNA. Upon first glance, you will see a small section which asks, "Are you an applicant with a documented disability?" and "Do you wish to be contacted by Accessibility Services?". When students respond "yes" to both questions, they will get a letter from CNA's Admissions Office indicating that their application has been copied to the Accessibility Services Coordinator (ASC) who will then follow up with the student to request documentation and discuss accommodation needs.

If students currently have supports/accommodations in high school, chances are they will need similar supports in post-secondary; therefore, it is in their best interest to let the College know this. Unfortunately, some students new to CNA believe that high schools notify the college regarding their accommodations and, consequently, expect that these accommodations will be in place when they arrive. Please ensure they understand that this is not the case and it is their responsibility to let the College know, either on the application or by seeing the ASC upon registration, they have a documented disability and require accommodations.

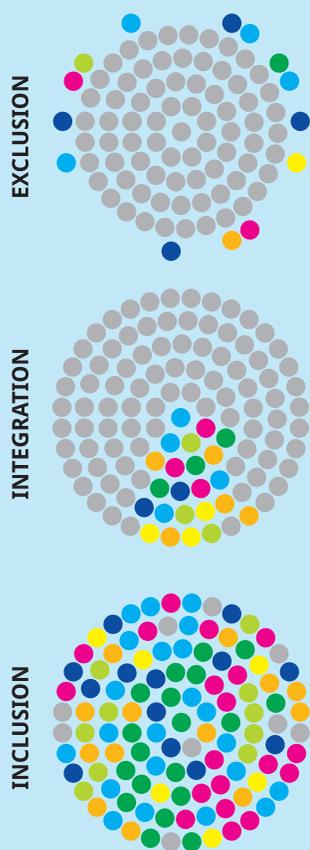
The earlier students contact us, the better! If we know they have a disability, we can ensure the supports that have been approved for them are in place when they need them. Contacting us early provides opportunities to help students prepare more effectively for the transition to College.

Money! Money! Money! Who Could Use Some?

What an opportunity for students with disabilities to receive money to offset their educational costs! It is definitely worth reminding students that there are grants available through the Student Aid: Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Financial Assistance application process for students with documented disabilities:

- **Canada Student Grant for Students with Permanent Disabilities (CSG-PD)**
Basic yearly grant of \$2000
- **Canada Student Grant for Services and Equipment for Students with Permanent Disabilities (CSG-PDSE)**
Up to \$8000

Besides the basic grant, the Canada Student Loan program offers a grant to help offset disability-related costs for students. Any student who identifies a disability and may need additional supports (tutoring, laptop, etc.) should be applying for this grant. **It is important to make sure that students have the required documentation from the high school before they leave in June. Both Student Aid and CNA need this documentation in the spring.**



A look at our numbers

Each year, the number of students at CNA who identify as having a disability increases. In September 2016, 646 students were registered with Accessibility Services; however, it is quite common for students to continue to identify throughout the academic year so this number always increases.

The most frequent accommodations our students use are additional time for exams (time plus one half) in a small group setting and readers for exams (using assistive technology/Kurzweil).

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Know me by my name, strengths, abilities, hopes and dreams, **NOT** my diagnosis.

www.disabilityisnatural.com

Dates and Deadlines: Apply Now!

Our programs fill up fast. Please encourage your students to apply now to ensure they have the best chance to get into their program of choice. Some programs have long wait lists and if students wait until the last minute to apply, they may not get in.

High school students can send in their applications once they have started Grade 12. Students with disabilities should take particular care to apply early as some academic accommodations may take time to arrange, there are deadlines to apply for disability-related funding, and students may be offered the opportunity to shadow the programs they are interested in to ensure a good fit.

- **Grant for High Need Students with Permanent Disabilities**
Over \$8000

The above information is based on the 2016-17 application.

A student's first point of contact to find out more about these grants is to talk to their guidance counsellor. Others who can assist are College of the North Atlantic's Accessibility Services Coordinators or counsellors and/or representatives with Student Aid directly. The earliest students can apply for the grant(s) is late May or early June when the new Student Aid applications for 2017-18 are posted on line.

Students may still qualify for the grants even if they have saved their money to attend college, their parents have saved money for them to attend college, their parents have high income, or there is an RESP.

Check here for further information: www.aesl.gov.nl.ca/studentaid//disabilities/index.html.

Why Are Updated Assessments Important?

Students with a learning disability, specific learning disorder, speech/language delay, or intellectual disability should talk to their guidance counsellor about having an assessment report available for them that is less than five years old. **CNA recommends that assessments be updated while students are in their senior high years—that is, within the final three years of school.** The main reason for this is that students do not always go directly from high school to college. An assessment updated in senior high allows a student more time to keep what is considered to be a current assessment on hand. This not only allows them to be guaranteed supports from Accessibility Services but it also allows for the best opportunity to qualify for supports from a number of agencies:

- **Student Aid**
Both CNA and Student Aid will accept older assessments that note the specific disability; however, those assessments must be accompanied by updated achievement testing and a corroboration of the earlier diagnosis by a qualified individual such as the guidance counsellor.
- **Publishers**
In order to access textbooks in an alternate format for students with disabilities in post-secondary institutions, AS must make a request to publishers on a book-by-book basis and provide confirmation that there is a specific diagnosis of a perceptual disability. Therefore, students who are currently receiving this accommodation should have an updated assessment citing that type of disability.
- **Department of Advanced Education, Skills and Labour (AESL)**
Students who complete a program in the trades and register for subsequent block training must submit disability documentation to AESL. Its staff will then determine if they qualify to receive accommodations during their block exams. AS can do so on the student's behalf.

Please note: Students should be reminded to check with any post-secondary institutions to which he/she is applying to verify documentation requirements.

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