

Tips for Your First Meeting with Accessibility Services

Booking Your 1st Meeting

It is recommended that you contact Accessibility Services as soon as you accept your offer of admission to Northern College. As part of our accommodation process, you will have an initial meeting with the Accessibility Services department.

[You can find Accessibility Services' contact information on our College website.](https://www.northerncollege.ca/students/advising/accessibility/)

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Be prepared to have documentation for your meeting. When booking your initial meeting, ask “What documentation do I need?” and request a contact name, fax number, email, or mailing address.

Here’s a few examples of what you can say when you call to book an appointment.

- “I had an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) in high school and am looking for similar supports.”
- “I have a disability (you may be asked to be specific) and will require some academic accommodations at Northern College.”
- “I need some assistive technology – who can help me at Northern College?”

How can you obtain copies of your documentation?

- Your high school may still have copies of documentation in your Ontario Student Record (OSR). If you are still in high school, request copies of your most recent IEP and/or documentation from your resource teacher before you graduate. If you have graduated, contact the Student Services or equivalent at your previous high school.
- Your family physician or specialist (e.g, Psychologist, Psychiatrist, Speech and Language Pathologist, Occupational Therapist) should be able to source relevant reports and be able to complete the relevant forms required by Accessibility Services.
- If you are having difficulties, contact Accessibility Services – we can help.

Preparation for your Meeting

It is a good idea to take some time to prepare yourself before your meeting with Accessibility Services. You are welcome to bring a parent, guardian, or friend to your meeting if you’d like; however, be aware that you will need to speak about yourself, your disability, and how it impacts your ability to learn or demonstrate your knowledge.

There are several steps you can take to prepare for your intake meeting:

- Gather your documentation. That's your IEP, medical reports, psycho-educational assessments, etc.
- Review your documentation. You may be asked to summarize your documentation as well as your strengths and weaknesses.
- If you don't understand your documentation, ask your resource teacher, parents/guardians, why your IEP was put in place.

Ask yourself:

- Does your documentation accurately reflect your strengths and weaknesses? Does it feel like it's current and reflective of who you are now?
- Did you use all your accommodations on your IEP? What accommodations worked for you?
- What is your biggest concern about going to College?

Remember to keep an open mind through this process. Prepare for the fact that your accommodations in College may not be the same as they were in high school. You are entering an exciting new system of education that is preparing you for employment in a career!

During your meeting:

It's likely that your 1st meeting with Accessibility Services will take less than an hour to get through. During the appointment, your counsellor/advisor will listen to your learning history and how your disability affects you. They will discuss your documentation with you, and let you know what accommodations can be provided appropriately.

Possible questions to ask your Accessibility Advisor:

- Can I reduce my course load if needed?
- Is there assistive technology available?
- Can I get help with improving my skills, such as organization, time management, or note-taking?
- What do I do if I'm struggling with course work?
- Are there transitional programs available for students with disabilities?
- Is there a common space made available specifically for students with disabilities?
- Is there funding available for students with disabilities?
- What should I do or who do I contact if I have concerns about my academic accommodations?

- How can I let Accessibility Services know if I am comfortable with them speaking to other people in the College about my support services? (e.g. my professors, parents, FAO, etc.)

After your meeting:

After your intake meeting, there will likely be a few things on your mind to do to ensure that your accommodations are in place:

- Make sure you book appointments to speak to:
 - The Assistive Technologist.
 - The Learning Strategist.
- Book your test/exams in the Testing Center to ensure you access accommodated tests.
- Remember to re-register with Accessibility Services every semester!