

Academic Consideration vs. Academic Accommodation: Faculty Guide

1. What are academic accommodations?

Academic accommodations are planned adjustments or supports that remove disability-related barriers to learning. Accommodations allow students to access course materials, participate fully, and meet the essential academic requirements of their program. Accommodations are determined based on documentation provided by the student to Accessible Learning Services (ALS) and outlined in an accommodation plan.

2. What is academic consideration?

Academic consideration is formalized flexibility provided to any student experiencing extenuating circumstances (health or compassionate grounds) that significantly impact their ability to meet specific academic obligations but does not meet the definition of any protected grounds under the Human Rights Code. Academic consideration is the institution's compassionate and human response to life altering events for students. Feasibility of an academic consideration requests is decided by instructors. Students can request for academic consideration independently without a verification letter.

3. What is the difference between academic accommodations and academic considerations?

While both aim to support students:

Accommodations	Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accommodations plans are formalized through an accommodation letter Address barriers to education on protected Code grounds (i.e., Disability) Ensure equitable access to education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration is a request made in writing, that may be accompanied by a Counsellor Verification Letter Address barriers that are acute and time sensitive that do not meet criteria for protections under the Code Support short term, temporary unexpected circumstances.

4. What is the difference between an Accommodation Letter and a Consideration Letter?

Accommodation Letter:

- Issued by the Accessible Learning Services (ALS) to address disability related barriers
- Outlines the formal accommodations a student is entitled to receive based on medical documentation (e.g., extra time on exams, note-taking support, alternate format materials)

Verification Letter (for Academic Consideration):

- Designed as a tool to support faculty in making balanced decisions to address unique student needs.
- Confirms that a student has encountered extenuating circumstances (e.g., family emergency) that impacted their ability to meet academic requirements without advocating for a particular solution or support

5. What is the duration for these supports?

These timelines are designed as a guide and recognize that each situation is unique and requires an individualized approach.

Accommodation	Consideration
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can be permanent (ongoing disabilities) or temporary (short-term injuries or conditions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Short term, typically resolved within a semester.

6. How do students access support?

Students are always encouraged to navigate conversations with faculty independently, but we recognize that students are at different places on their self-advocacy journey. This means that as a faculty member, you may see various degrees of staff involvement in the request processes to address students' individual needs and circumstances.

Accommodation	Consideration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students register with ALS through the student portal or email Students must send their approved accommodation plans to instructors each semester via the portal Specific adjustments (i.e., revised dates and deadlines) must be discussed as soon as possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requests should be made as soon as possible (ideally within 1 week) of the missed academic requirement to the course instructor in writing. Approved consideration plans must be summarized in writing once finalized.

7. What happens if a student's situation falls outside Accommodation and Consideration?

If a student's situation is not disability-related or doesn't fall within the short-term parameters of academic consideration, these cases are managed by the **Department/Program**. Examples include:

- Students requiring support for pregnancy related issues
- Students experiencing illness (i.e., flu) that impacted course work
- Student is participating in an institutional sanctioned activity

8. Who do I contact if I have questions?

Individual course instructors can seek assistance from the Chair (or designate), Accessibility Counsellor named on the Letter of Accommodation or Personal Counsellor names on the verification letter for student specific questions.

For general inquiries and assistance, please connect with ALS leadership through senecacnas@senecapolytechnic.ca