

ALS: Temporary v. Permanent Accommodations

Version 3

Published 3/17/2025 by Tracey Laurin Last updated 3/17/2025 7:30 PM by Tracey Laurin



ACCESSIBLE LEARNING SERVICES

During a student's time at Seneca Polytechnic, they may experience a temporary disability. Seneca Polytechnic's Accessible Learning Services offers academic accommodations to students with both permanent and temporary disabilities. In either case, students must complete the registration process with Accessible Learning Services and submit appropriate medical documentation detailing their functional limitations. This information helps in the creation of an Accommodation Letter tailored to their needs.

About Temporary Disabilities

What They Are

A temporary disability is different from a permanent disability and can be identified by one or more of the following characteristics:

- The functional limitations of the condition are expected to last for a limited time period.
- The diagnosis is new, and it may not yet be clear whether the condition will become permanent or ongoing.
- The symptoms are acute and significant.
- A full recovery is expected within a specific timeframe.
- The need for academic accommodation is limited to the duration of the functional limitations.
- The temporary disability exists alongside a permanent condition, based on one or more of the criteria mentioned above.

What They Are Not

It is important to differentiate between a temporary disability and other health conditions a student might experience. A temporary disability typically would not apply under the following circumstances:

- A common cold, flu, or virus where a full recovery is anticipated.
- A brief absence from class or missed test due to common illnesses like those mentioned above.
- Stress or undiagnosed symptoms of anxiety related to taking tests or exams.
- Routine healthcare monitoring, such as check-ups, assessments, or evaluations.

Students are encouraged to follow their academic program's policies and procedures regarding missed classes, tests, or assignments when dealing with common illnesses as outlined above.

Examples of Temporary Disabilities

The following are examples of temporary disabilities for which academic accommodations may be requested or required at Seneca Polytechnic:

- Sprains, strains, or fractures
- Physical or psychological impairments resulting from motor vehicle accidents
- Concussions

- Newly diagnosed mental health conditions, with ongoing treatment and evaluation
- Returning to studies following surgery
- Undiagnosed conditions where a student is actively seeking assessment and evaluation by a regulated healthcare professional
- One or more of the above conditions occurring alongside an existing permanent, diagnosed disability

Note: Common illnesses may exacerbate existing conditions or lead to new diagnoses that fall under the temporary disability category.

Permanent vs. Temporary Disabilities

In cases of permanent disability, students are likely to experience recurring or episodic flare-ups of their condition, leading to periods of decreased functionality. Additionally, the functional limitations of their condition are not expected to significantly change or resolve over time. As such, academic accommodations are generally needed throughout the student's course of study.

Examples of permanent disabilities may include Autism Spectrum Disorder, current diagnosis of Learning Disability, sensory impairment (e.g., blindness or low vision, deaf or hard of hearing), some mental health conditions, and chronic systemic medical conditions.