

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REFERENCE GUIDE

Strengthening Transitions for Students with Autism
Spectrum Disorders



AUTISM PROGRAMS
School Support Program



Authors

Raymond Peart, ASD Coordinator/Educator, Learning Disability Services, York University

Maureen Barnes, Manager, Learning Disability Services, York University

Contributors

Mary Ierullo, Surrey Place Centre

Editors

Maureen Barnes, Manager, Learning Disability Services, York University

Mary Ierullo, Surrey Place Centre

A MESSAGE TO FUTURE STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

If you have a diagnosed disability, we encourage you to identify yourself during the admissions process. Even if your circumstances don't impact your admissibility to the University (i.e. you meet our admission requirements), we want to make sure you know about the support services we have in place. In no way will identifying yourself be a disadvantage to you. Nothing will appear on your academic transcript that would identify you as a student with a disability. We want to know who you are only so we can ensure you get the support you need during the admission process and afterwards.

If you become a York student, you should contact York University's Disability Services to arrange an appointment with a disabilities counsellor as soon as possible after you accept your offer of admission in order to arrange for academic accommodations. Failure to make these arrangements may jeopardize your opportunity to receive academic accommodations in a timely fashion. Students transitioning to other institutions should connect with the appropriate Disability or Access service.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ) FOR FAMILIES

Strengthening Transitions for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders

This section lists the typical questions that various family members may have about the admissions, funding and accommodations. The responses in this section, while applicable to other postsecondary institutions, are largely derived from the York process. We strongly encourage you to connect early to the institutions of your choice.

ADMISSIONS

<p>Is there a standard practice for admissions to post-secondary institutions that is legislated by Ontario?</p>	<p>Because Ontario universities are autonomous institutions, each university is responsible for its own admissions procedures and practices, including setting policy regarding special admissions processes. The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities does not have the authority to intervene in the admissions policies and requirements that are determined by the University.</p>
<p>What is the standard policy for repeating courses to improve a student's opportunity to gain entrance into college or university?</p>	<p>There is no standard policy. Every institution is unique with their policies and procedures. It is recommended that you contact the institution that you are interested in attending. We strongly recommend that you consult with the Admissions department.</p>
<p>Do you do additional testing for students on the autism spectrum?</p>	<p>No, we do not do any type of additional testing for entry into postsecondary for students with ASD.</p>
<p>What are the program requirements to get into York?</p>	<p>Program admission requirements for each department at York University can be found here: http://futurestudents.yorku.ca/requirements/disabilities</p>

<p>What are modified admissions?</p>	<p>A modified admission is a process in which the university will consider an application from a prospective student even if the student's grades do not meet the threshold for acceptance. There are several important factors to note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • having a disability alone is not a case for a modified admission; • discovering one has a disability in grade 11 or 12 can be considered a case for a modified admission; • illness or depression are considered factors for modified admissions; • the grade variance is typically only 3 to 5%; • students must apply through modified admissions to be considered.
<p>I have a student with ASD. What services are available at York? Are these services available at every institution?</p>	<p>York has a number of services available to students with ASD. Such services range from a support group, a mentorship program, to individual coaching and private sensory pods that support students in diminishing anxiety and/or stress.</p> <p>We cannot speak to the services offered at every college and university in Ontario. We recommend going to the following website to gain an overview of the services and supports offered by Ontario colleges and universities: http://www.transitionresourceguide.ca/</p>

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ) FOR FAMILIES

Strengthening Transitions for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders

This section lists the typical questions that various family members may have about the admissions, funding and accommodations. The responses in this section, while applicable to other postsecondary institutions, are largely derived from the York process. We strongly encourage you to connect early to the institutions of your choice.

FUNDING

My son/daughter does not have a psycho-educational assessment. Am I still eligible for accommodations?

Students who have documentation stating they have a permanent disability from a registered medical practitioner will be provided with initial or interim accommodations. We might request that a full psycho-educational assessment be done and we can guide parents through this process.

Recent psycho-educational assessments give you access to funds such as the Bursary for Students with Disabilities (BSWD). This is money that you do not have to pay back and that can be used for supports such as assistive technology (hardware and software). This bursary requires recent documentation in order to access most supports.

My son/daughter has a psycho-educational assessment that is older than five years. Am I still eligible for accommodations?

Yes. We can often set interim accommodations while we support you in getting an updated report.

<p>How do I get an updated psycho-educational assessment?</p>	<p>Psycho-educational assessments can be obtained through a number of different agencies, such as The Redpath Centre. Psycho-educational assessments completed by the Regional Assessment and Resource Centre (RARC) are around \$2600, typically \$1000-\$1500 less than other agencies. York is affiliated with RARC. Before deciding to go out and get an updated psycho-educational assessment, please consult with the institution you plan to attend to see if a referral to RARC is an option for you (http://www.queensu.ca/rarc/assessment-services/mobile-assessment-team-mat-students-across-southern-ontario).</p>
<p>Will BSWD cover a new assessment?</p>	<p>Yes, up to \$2000; sometimes \$2600 for a full ASD assessment.</p>
<p>When should I apply for OSAP?</p>	<p>As soon as you say yes to your acceptance, apply for OSAP. June 30th is the recommended deadline. Qualifying for OSAP entitles you to the BSWD. Even if you only qualify for \$1 of OSAP, you are still eligible for the BSWD. You do not have to accept OSAP funds to get the BSWD.</p>
<p>What if I do not qualify for OSAP?</p>	<p>Connect with your disability services office for more information on this to see if it makes sense to appeal.</p>
<p>What is the Bursary for Students with Disabilities (BSWD)?</p>	<p>The BSWD are funds that go toward supporting assistive supports such as technology (e.g., Livescribe, Kurzweill 3000, Dragon) and tutoring these funds do not have to be paid back. Even if you are only eligible for \$1 of OSAP, you are eligible for the BSWD. For more comprehensive explanation of the BSWD, please visit: https://osap.gov.on.ca/prodconsum/groups/forms/documents/forms/prdr011575.pdf.</p> <p>Additionally, you may find additional information about the BSWD through your institution of choice. For example, http://sfs.yorku.ca/aid/scholarships/disabilities.htm</p>

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ) FOR FAMILIES

Strengthening Transitions for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders

This section lists the typical questions that various family members may have about the admissions, funding and accommodations. The responses in this section, while applicable to other postsecondary institutions, are largely derived from the York process. We strongly encourage you to connect early to the institutions of your choice.

ACCOMMODATIONS

<p>How much extra time can I get on a test or exam?</p>	<p>It is also important to remember that accommodations are specific to the student's profile (psycho-educational assessment) and are determined on a case-by-case basis.</p>
<p>What about a situation where a student has connected and you are familiar with the student? Does the student still need to register with the disability services office or will it be done automatically?</p>	<p>Normally students receive no more than 50% additional time. Members of a disability services office/department cannot and will not register a student, even if the members are familiar with the student. All students must individually register with a disability services office of their desired postsecondary institution if they ever wish to access services. When students arrive at their postsecondary institution, no one is aware of their disability. It is incumbent on the student to register.</p>
<p>What accommodations and supports can I get in class?</p>	<p>Typical in-class accommodations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sitting closer to the instructor; • Ability to audio record lectures; and • Using a laptop in class. <p>Other accommodations can be discussed on a case by case basis.</p>
<p>Can a course be modified as an accommodation?</p>	<p>No, courses are not modified. Accommodations may exist to better support the student in completing the course successfully, but a modified approach is not an accommodation. The integrity of the course/program must be maintained. Therefore, the same expectations for course completion apply to each student.</p>

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

What are the ideal skills that students with ASD should have prior to arrival at postsecondary?

Ideally, we would like students to have some sense of self-awareness and self-advocacy skills around how to effectively ask for support. We know that students with ASDs are typically strong academically, but communication and understanding how and when to communicate their needs remains a critical obstacle. Students also need to be able to independently get to class, participate in class and hand in assignments.

What is your department's stance on note-taking?

While there are situations where students require a note-taker, there are other strategies that we recommend first. One concern with note-taking is that the individual assigned to take the notes (the volunteer) is interpreting what is important for the student. The repercussions of mis-identifying relevant information can be catastrophic. We consider the volunteer Note Sharer's notes as supplemental to the student's notes or understanding of the course material. There are alternative options like assistive technology that take notes, such as LiveScribe Pen, Microsoft OneNote and Audio Note that can develop new learning strategies while taking notes.

What if I cannot afford a new psycho-educational assessment?

Typically, the costs of an adult psycho-educational assessment can range anywhere from \$3500 upward. There may be ways to cover that cost that you might not realize. If you are employed and have insurance, contact your insurance company to see if it covers the costs of a new psycho-educational assessment, in part or in full. Additionally, contact your institution's Disability Office. They may be able to offer insight and provide you with possible solutions of which you were not aware.

THE SCHEDULE: SECONDARY SCHOOL VS UNIVERSITY

The second section of this document explores the university schedule in some detail. We begin with an overview of the high school schedule and what student expectations might be of the university schedule. Also, some common misperceptions about the university schedule are presented by various examples of actual university timetables. We acknowledge and caution our readers that there are differences between school boards in Ontario, so if the high school schedule is unfamiliar, please keep in mind that we have borrowed the template of one school board.

An example of a secondary school schedule:

Period	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Period 1 8:45 am– 10:45 am	HRE4M-01 Ms. Smith 103	ASDRES-04 Mr. Jones 102	ENG4C1-01 Ms. Kyle 208	PAI401-01 Mr. Wayne P1	HRE4M-01 Ms. Smith 103
2A 10:50 am– 11:30 am	Lunch	Lunch	ENG4C1-01 Mr. Wayne P1	ENG4C1-01 Ms. Kyle 208	Lunch
2B 11:33 am – 12:13 pm	ASDRES-04 Mr. Jones 102	HRE4M-01 Ms. Smith 103	ENG4C1-01 Mr. Wayne P1	ENG4C1-01 Ms. Kyle 208	ASDRES-04 Mr. Jones 102
2C 12:16 pm– 12:56 pm	ASDRES-04 Mr. Jones 102	HRE4M-01 Ms. Smith 103	Lunch	Lunch	ASDRES-04 Mr. Jones 102
Period 3 1:00-1:50 pm	ENG4C1-01 Ms. Kyle 208	ENG4C1-01 Mr. Wayne P1	HRE4M-01 Ms. Smith 103	ASDRES-04 Mr. Jones 102	ENG4C1-01 Ms. Kyle 208
Period 4 1:55-12:45 pm	ENG4C1-01 Mr. Wayne P1	ENG4C1-01 Ms. Kyle 208	ASDRES-04 Mr. Jones 102	HRE4M-01 Ms. Smith 103	ENG4C1-01 Mr. Wayne P1

EXPECTATIONS, TRUTHS AND MYTHS

When going into a new environment, we have certain expectations. University is no exception. Typically, in our experience, students and their families believe that the structure from high school to post secondary does not bring a dramatic change in classroom scheduling and that because students have more flexibility, they can create something that is always manageable and time effective.

An example of a what you may think a university schedule is:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
7:30 am	Class Two (Lecture)	Class Three (Lecture)		Class Four (Lecture)	Class Five (Lecture)
8:30 am					
9:30 am					
10:30 am					
11:30 am					
12:30 pm	Lunch	Lunch			
1:30 pm			Lunch	Lunch	
2:30 pm	Class Five (Tutorial)	Class Two (Tutorial)		Class Three (Tutorial)	Lunch
3:30 pm					
4:30 pm					
5:30 pm					
6:30 pm					
7:30 pm					
8:30 pm					
9:30 pm					
10:30 pm					
11:30 pm					
12:30 am					

STRENGTHENING TRANSITIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS

THE REALITY OF A UNIVERSITY CLASS SCHEDULE

While there are many variations of a class schedule, the below represents some key differences between a high school schedule and a university schedule. For example, there is no consistent lunch time, the same course can have different start times and durations. Courses may be held in different frequencies, in different locations throughout the week or may be held in the evening.

An example of a typical university schedule:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
7:30 am					
8:30 am			Course 1 (Tutorial) (8:30 – 9:30 am)		
9:30 am	Course 1 (Lecture) 9:30 – 10:30 am			Course 1 (Lecture) 9:30 – 10:30 am	
10:30 am					
11:30 am					
12:30 pm		Course 2 (Tutorial) 12:30 – 1:30 pm			
1:30 pm					
2:30 pm	Course 3 (Lecture) 2:30 – 3:30 pm		Course 3 (Lab/Studio) 2:30 – 3:30 pm	Course 2 (Lecture) 2:30 – 4:30 pm	Course 3 (Lab/Studio) 2:30 – 3:30 pm
3:30 pm					
4:30 pm					
5:30 pm	Course 4 (Seminar) 16:00 – 19:00				
6:30 pm					
7:30 pm				Course 5 (Lecture) 19:00 - 22:00	
8:30 pm					
9:30 pm					
10:30 pm					
11:30 pm					

THE REALITY OF A STUDENT’S FULL UNIVERSITY SCHEDULE

Studying, projects and assignments at the university level also need to be factored into a students schedule. Generally students are expected do complete three hours of studying for every one hour of a lecture.

An example of a university schedule combining class and study time:

	Sun.	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
7:30 am							
8:30 am				Course 1 (Tutorial) 8:30 – 9:30			
9:30 am		Course 1 (Lecture) 9:30 – 10:30	Study (2 hours)		Course 1 (Lecture) 9:30 – 10:30	Study (2 hours)	
10:30 am	Study (2 hours)						
11:30 am							Study (3 hours)
12:30 pm			Course 2 (Tutorial) 2:30 – 3:30 pm	Study (1 hour)	Study (1 hour)		
1:30 pm							
2:30 pm	Study (4 hours)	Course 3 (Lab/Studio) 14:30 – 15:30	Study (3 hours)	Course 3 (Lab/Studio) 14:30 – 15:30	Course 2 (Lecture) 14:30 – 16:30	Course 3 (Lab/Studio) 14:30 – 15:30	
3:30 pm							
4:30 pm		Course 4 (Seminar) 16:00 – 19:00					
5:30 pm							Study (3 hours)
6:30 pm							
7:30 pm			Study (4 hours)	Course 5 (Lecture) 19:00 – 22:00	Study (3 hours)		
8:30 pm							
9:30 pm	Study (2 hours)	Study (3 hours)					
10:30 pm							
11:30 pm							
12:30 am							
Study Hours	8	3	9	1	3	5	6
Total Study Time per week: 36							

WHAT'S MISSING FROM THE UNIVERSITY SCHEDULE?

Balancing personal well being with the demands of school

It is important to remember that the last calendar representing a 5 course schedule only contains class and study time. We have purposely omitted other aspects of the schedule to present the reality of how demanding a 5-course schedule can be.

Omissions from the 5-course schedule:

- Commute Time
- Time to work on assignments
- Recreation
- Eating
- Sleeping
- Friends
- Family
- Part time or full time job(s)
- Meeting with your Disability Office
- Illness

