

Supporting Autistic Post-Secondary Students

Presented by Autism Nova Scotia



Land Acknowledgement



We pay our respects to the Mi'kmaq people, whose traditional territory we are gathered on today. We also pay our respects to the African Nova Scotian people, whose ancestors were brought to this land against their will and whose contributions have shaped this province.

Language



Person-first and Identity-first language

Please note that this presentation contains a mix of both person-first and identity-first language when referring to autism.

To recognize and respect the choices informed by personal preference of those within the autistic and autism community, the following terms are used throughout this presentation:

- Autistic(s)
- Autistic person or individual(s)
- Person or individual(s) with autism
- People with autism
- Autistic people
- Autistic community
- Individuals/people/person on the autism spectrum

Autism Nova Scotia



Our Vision:
A world where autism is understood, accepted and everyone is living their lives fully.



Our Mandate:
We are a community-based organization that builds understanding, acceptance, and inclusion for individuals on the Autism Spectrum and their families through leadership, advocacy, training and programming across the lifespan.

About Autism Nova Scotia



- Founded in 2002 by Jack & Joan Craig.
- Started as a resource centre in Halifax.
- Today: Providing supports to families and individuals living on the spectrum province-wide.
- Our core values: inclusion, respect, collaboration, acceptance and courage.

Chapter Locations



Today's Topics



- Difference Between High School and Post-Secondary
- Accessibility Services and Accommodations
 - Including the Duty to Accommodate
- Additional Supports at Schools
 - Including peer support, academic strategist, mental health supports, and social groups
- Grants Available
 - What those Grants can fund and access across Canada
- Foundational Skills Heading In
 - Focusing on the evidence based practices that PASS follows
 - The 19 key areas linked to post-secondary success

Please note, today's webinar has been created as a guideline to support post-secondary students across the country. However, the writer's experience and base knowledge is drawn from the province of Nova Scotia. Please check with your province/territory's specific post-secondary education facilities and supports for up to date information on topics covered today.

High School versus Post- Secondary Education (PSE)



Transition

High School

- Choices are limited.
- More structure.
- Smaller class sizes.
- Spend more hours in class.
- Frequent contact with teachers.
- Less study time.
- Less self-advocacy.

VS.



Post-Secondary

- Choices are plentiful.
- Less structure.
- Class sizes vary.
- Spend less time in class.
- Infrequent contact with professors.
- More study time.
- More self-advocacy.

Structure and Time Management

High School

- More structure
- Classes usually are all day long.
- Teachers carefully monitor class attendance.
- Student responsibility for planning their time is minimal.
 - Administrators, teachers, and coaches usually structure your time.
- Parents and teachers help students break down projects and provide reminders of homework due and when tests will be taken.

Post-Secondary

- Less structure
- Students have more control to set their own schedule and are responsible for getting to class.
- Student responsibility for planning their time is high.
- Students are expected to read the syllabus provided in each course and complete assignments independently and on time.
- Instructors and professors may not take attendance

Course Syllabus

Some instructors/professors will review the syllabus in class, but others do not!

- Even if they do not review – you are still responsible for knowing the information and meeting the expectations/deadlines
- Review the syllabus outside of class and ask questions if anything is unclear
 - You can ask your professor or instructor, your Teaching Assistant (TA), or tutor.

Course Syllabus

Key Part	What do I find here?
Instructor Information	Name; Contact information; Location of office and Office hours
Course Information	Date, Time, & Location of classes; Required reading materials; Other required material (ex: lab safety gear)
Grading Rubrics	Rubrics will differ depending on program and class
Assignments & Due Dates	Assignment Description; Assignment Expectations; How to submit work; Due dates

Class Time

High School

- Usually, students spend 6 hours each day (30 hours per week) in class.
- Students proceed from one class directly to another, usually in the same building.

Post-Secondary

- Students spend fewer hours in class and may only spend 6 to 12 hours each week in class.
- There may be long breaks between classes.
- Class times vary throughout the day and evening.

Study Time

High School

- Study time outside of class may be minimal.
- You are expected to read and complete short assignments that are discussed in class.

Post-Secondary

- You are assigned substantial amounts of reading and writing which may not be discussed in class.
- You need to study at least 2 to 3 hours outside of class for each hour in class to keep up with course work.

TIPS

Many students don't realize that it is their responsibility to do so much work outside of class time!!

Instruction

High School

- Teachers may:
 - Check notes
 - Simplify assignments
 - Remind students of deadlines
 - Allow time to work during class
 - Tell students what to study for tests

Post-Secondary

- Student is responsible for notes.
- Work must be completed as assigned.
- Few reminders of deadlines (Students need to check syllabus for dates, updates and also check online platforms such as Teams, Moodle, BrightSpace, etc.).
- Class time is often only for instruction; all other work must be done on student's own time.
- Instructors or professors may not follow the textbook.
 - Instead, they may add to the text using background information, research, or illustrations.

Before Post-Secondary

Things to look into before starting post-secondary:

- Important dates calendar.
 - Highlights when to apply to residence, pay tuition, register for courses, etc.
- Student accessibility services.
 - Help set up accommodations, navigate services, explain funding, and advocate for student needs.
- Student loans and grants.
 - Can apply in early May.
- Course registration and course reduction.
 - Portals can open in May and academic advisors can support course selection and reduction.

What is Disclosure?

- This is the act of making something known.
- For PSE students, this is often the act of making your accommodations and needs known to faculty and staff.
- For example:
 - Telling your professor that you may require extra time on the test due to use of adaptive technology features
 - Telling members of your group project that you prefer to use online meetings to avoid certain stimuli
 - Telling your tutor and/or academic strategist so they can identify the best way to relay information to you

Disclosure in Post-Secondary

- You are not required to disclose to anyone. They are not entitled to your personal information.
- However, disclosing to your accessibility advisor is necessary to receive accommodations.

So, what happens if you disclose to your advisor?

- Your advisor will use this information to guide the setup of accommodations with you.
- Then, they will send your professors a letter of accommodation. This letter **DOES NOT** include any information related to diagnosis or disability.
- It does include:
 - Your name
 - Class information
 - A list of your registered accommodations

Disclosure is always your choice. Deciding to do so can be difficult, but there is no wrong answer.

Accommodations and Accessibility Services



Accommodation VS Adjustment



An accommodation is something you ADD to the environment to support the individual. Any accommodations that are implemented must work without another person being there to remind the individual to use it. There is a growing trend to use the term adjustment in lieu of accommodation:

Adjustment

Reframes the onus for change to environmental conditions, rather than the person with disabilities.

Accommodation

Implies that someone is requesting ‘special treatment’ rather than the fair treatment to which they are entitled.



Accommodations in Post-Secondary

Accommodations in post-secondary vary for each student.

- Based on documented need from psychoeducational assessments, recommendations from healthcare professionals, IEP's from high school, and/or other supporting documents.

Accessibility Advisors are your go-to people for accessing accommodations, and can support in advocating for them to instructors/professors and other PSE faculty.

- Accessibility Advisors may be called something different at your school
- I.e Student Success Advisor, Student Accessibility Specialist

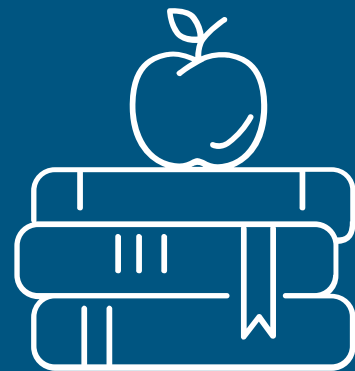
Connecting with your Accessibility center can often start upon admission to the school

- Varies by province and by post-secondary facility
- Can reach out to the admissions team if unsure

Accommodations in Post-Secondary

Once connected with the Accessibility Center, it is essential to communicate your needs effectively.

Be open and honest about the challenges you face and the accommodations that have helped you succeed in the past. The Accessibility Advisors are there to support you every step of the way, from reviewing your documentation to working with your professors to implement your accommodations effectively.



Duty to Accommodate



- Legal obligation to accommodate students with a disability
- Providing adjustments to the environment, or alternative arrangements

Limit to the Duty to Accommodate = Undue Hardship

- Undue hardship may involve: cost, essential requirements of the program
 - Will vary from PSE to PSE
- Undue hardship does not involve: inconvenience, collective agreements, or workload.

New Brunswick's Guideline on Accommodations:



The goal of an accommodation is to remove or reduce barriers to provide equal opportunity in the academic environment.

Accommodations cannot modify academic outcomes, and they do not guarantee academic success.

Common Accommodations



EXTRA TIME

This allows the student additional time when writing quizzes, tests, and exams. Ranging from .5 to 2x the time, it is calculated based on how much time your class is given to write the test and assessed need.



REDUCED COURSE LOAD

Based on a need, this allows students to take a reduced course load and still be considered a full-time student



EXTENDED (OR FLEXIBLE) DEADLINES

This is a proactive accommodation. Students can request an extension on a due date for assignments (typically 72 hours - cannot be past when the graded assignment is returned to students). The request must be made prior to the due date day.



NOTE-TAKER

Encompasses three options:

- Notes from a designated note-taker
- Copies of notes from professors
- Assistive technology to record lectures

More Common Accommodations



THE USE OF HEADPHONES/EARPLUGS

This allows students to wear headphones/earplugs to reduce noise in the environment.



THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

This allows the student to use different technologies and software. For example:

- Text-to-speech software
- Use of calculator
- Laptop instead of handwriting



ALTERNATIVE TESTING ENVIRONMENTS

This varies depending on student need. Some examples are:

- Independent room
- Reduced number of people in room
- Reduced size of room



THE USE OF MEMORY AIDS

This accommodation allows the student to bring in a memory support to their test. This can be a cue sheet, scrap paper, formula sheet, or other forms to support the retrieval process for student's who have documented need for it.

More Common Accommodations



THE USE OF A SCRIBE

This allows the student to speak their answers while the scribe records them on the test (either typing or writing). This can be used in addition to a Reader.



TAKING BREAKS

This allows students to take breaks during class and/or exams. There are parameters for these breaks that will be explained by your accessibility advisor.



THE USE OF A READER

This allows the student to have an individual read their tests, quizzes, and exam to them. They do not need to use this accommodation for every test, it can be on a test-by-test basis.



ONE TEST PER CALENDAR DAY

Based on a need, this ensures students only have one exam per calendar day, versus two or even three in some cases.

Adaptive Technology (AT)

- A range of strategies and resources which includes services and or any piece of equipment, system or product used to enable a student to meet learning outcomes or to improve or maintain a student's ability to meet learning outcomes.
- AT has the potential to increase a student's control over objects, daily activities, experiences, and subsequent learning.

Adaptive Technology (AT)

Low Tech

Note-taker

Highlighters/Colored
Notes

Headphones

Fidget objects

Mid Tech

Adapted keyboard/mouse

Speech-to-Text or Text-to-Speech software

E-books/PDF versions

Apps under \$100

High Tech

Computers/Laptops

Tablets/iPads

Smartpens

Apps over \$100

Additional Supports



Career Counselor

- Career counselors on campus can help you explore your interests and possible career paths that might align with those interests
- Career counselors can support you in making career related goals
- May provide support with resume writing, interview skills and job searching techniques

Academic Advising

Academic advisors can support you with various questions relating to your program, including (but not limited to):

- Picking a major/minor
- Changing your major/minor
- Understanding your required courses for your program
- Support you in understanding faculty grading schemes
- Help you understand transfer credits

Health Services

- Most campuses offer health services on campus
- At many campuses, there will be a doctor available for you to book appointments with when you have a health concern
- Mental health wellness and counseling programs are often available on campus, and can be accessed through health services

Library Services

- The library can offer you a wide variety of services on campus
- Ensure to do your research to learn about what resources your campus library can provide you with
- Your on-campus library can often support with topics such as:
 - Support learning how to navigate your online learning platform (ie. Brightspace)
 - Receive support with researching for papers/assignments
 - Book a study room
 - Access to copier/printer
 - Access to books/research journals

Tutoring

- Tutors can support you with:
 - Questions you may have with the content of your classes
 - Help you prepare for tests and quizzes
 - Support you with better understanding your assignments
- Your accessibility advisor will be able to connect you with a tutor for your courses
- Some tutoring costs can be covered by the Services and Equipment Grant

Writing Center

- The writing center is an on-campus resource that can support you with your writing
- Writing centers are available either on a drop-in basis, or you may need to book an appointment. You can check your school's website to locate this information
- The writing center may offer services such as:
 - Developing a thesis to a paper
 - How to conduct research/complete citations properly
 - Review grammar/spelling errors
 - Review PowerPoint slides

Available Grants



Canada Student Grant for Students with Permanent Disabilities



- Student's may receive up to \$2800 per academic year
 - Does not have to be paid back!
- Eligibility includes:
 - Show of financial need
 - Attending a qualified post-secondary program
 - Are a student with a permanent disability
 - Can provide documentation showing the permanent disability
- Goal of the Grant:
 - To decrease financial barriers and reduce reliance on student loans
- Application is at the same time you apply for student aid with your province/territory
- Not applicable if you live in Northwest Territories or Quebec - they have their own student aid support

Northwest Territories & Quebec

Northwest Territories

- Five different Grants/Loans available outside of a Student Loan
- Only one is repayable
- Specifically for students with disabilities, there is up to \$4,000 per academic year for assistance with tuition, books, travel and accommodation



Quebec

- Funds sound similar to the Services and Equipment Grant
- Allotted amount depends on PT vs FT student and level of education
- Services listed are a reader, transcriber, interpreter, notetaker, and attendant



Canada Student Grant for Services and Equipment



- Students can receive up to \$20, 000 per academic year
 - Does not have to be paid back!
- The Grant is available even if you don't demonstrate financial need
 - Each province and territory is unique in what the Grant can cover, as well as the allotment of monies for each service/equipment
- Eligibility
 - Attending a qualified post-secondary program
 - Are a student with a permanent disability
 - Can provide documentation showing the permanent disability
- Access
 - Send written confirmation from a qualified person
 - Send a document which confirms the related cost of equipment and services
 - Qualified people include: accessibility advisor, guidance counselor, your school's financial aid administrative staff

Canada Student Grant for Services and Equipment



Equipment examples:

- Computer system
- Printer
- Noise cancelling headphones
- Voice Recognition Software
- Assistive Writing Software
- Smart pens and accessories

Services examples:

- Tutor
- Academic Strategist
- Notetaker
- Interpreter
- Psycho-ed reimbursement

Please note this is not an exhaustive list. Availability and coverage of services varies by province and territory.

For example, Nova Scotia provides up to \$150 per course for a notetaker. In comparison, British Columbia offers up to \$500 per course.

Provincial Outlines on Services & Equipment

Each province has its own list of services and equipment that the Grant supports, as well as how much money is available for that particular service or equipment. The following QR codes link to the information available through different provinces and territory's websites. For full lists, or for locations not mentioned, please connect with your Accessibility Advisor.

Links for information in:

- [British Columbia](#)
- [Nova Scotia](#)

Alberta



New Brunswick



Newfoundland & Labrador



Ontario



Yukon



Foundational Skills



What is PASS?



- Program for autistic students in Post-Secondary focused on **increasing independence and self-advocacy**.
- PASS supports skill development that is directly related to **academic success**.
- Students meet with PASS Specialists **1-2 times a week x1 hour** each session to work on their goals.
- PASS offers a Summer Program option to facilitate the transition from **Grade 12 to Post-Secondary education**.

The Success Checklist



- Secondary School Success Checklist (SSSC) developed by Center on Secondary Education for Students with ASD (CSESA)
 - Through the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- Tool to support students identifying goals related to independence, transition, social communication, and academic skills
 - Checklist is 25 pages long covering everything from locating bus stops and comfortableness adapting to change, to initiating contact with others and the ability to recognize own emotions
- Match the goal with evidence based practices to support goal acquisition
- Positive outcomes in these domains are linked to post-secondary success for autistic students

19 Foundational Skills



Core skills of the Success Checklist - what we base our Summer Program off of to help prepare students about to start post-secondary school.

- Use of and following daily/weekly planner to keep track of tasks
- Use of tools to keep track of assignments/work tasks and/or scheduling
- Bring appropriate materials to assigned locations
- Materials/workspace are organized
- Can identify steps required to complete assigned activities
- Can complete and submit assigned activities to the academic expectations
- Move to and arrive at assigned locations on time
- Request/initiate meetings with classmates, instructors, and PSE staff when it is needed
- Respond appropriately to feedback from supervisors, peers, and post-secondary staff

19 Foundational Skills



10. Take medication on time without support of others
11. Take effective notes in class
12. Ask for help or clarification during class when needed and appropriate
13. Know the course expectations of the work to complete
14. Check online learning platform for daily coursework update
15. Check university or college email daily
16. Respond to emails when needed
17. Can generate possible solutions to a problem
18. Can select the solution to the problem
19. Can carry out the solution to the problem



Questions?

Abby Lowry, PASS Manager
alowry@autismns.ca

