

## Job Description

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<b>Job Title:</b>	Director, AccessAbility Services
<b>Department:</b>	AccessAbility Services
<b>Reports To:</b>	Director, Student Success
<b>Jobs Reporting:</b>	Associate Director, Academic Accommodation; Associate Director, Accommodation Services; Operations Manager
<b>Salary Grade:</b>	USG 15
<b>Effective Date:</b>	June 2021

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### **Primary Purpose**

The Director, AccessAbility Services, is accountable to the Director, Student Success, and is responsible for providing strategic leadership, oversight, and effective management of AccessAbility Services, which is the University's centralized office for managing student academic accommodations. This involves leading the development, management, rationalization and assessment of AccessAbility Services' programs and functions at the University of Waterloo. This position is responsible for ensuring the operation of this unit meets and follows all critical elements within the accommodation planning process and adheres to relevant privacy legislations, human rights law, Ministry standards, accessibility legislation, and industry standards of practice. AccessAbility Services' programs and services focus on determining the need for academic accommodations for students with disabilities, then developing and facilitating accommodation plans to support the University's legal duty to accommodate students with disabilities. Services include accommodation consulting, medical health/clinical record review and storage, the provision of adaptive technologies and learning strategies, specialized campus transportation, in-class note takers, an Exam Centre to facilitate exam accommodation, and other disability-related support services.

A critical component of the incumbent's responsibilities is to offer subject matter expertise and guidance to the University about its obligations and responsibilities in meeting the legal duty to accommodate students with disabilities in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code. The position actively collaborates with the six Faculties and academic support units, including Associate Deans, Department Chairs, Registrar's Office, Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs, Cooperative Education and Housing, to provide advice and guidance related to fulfilling their specific duty to accommodate. This role offers the University guidance and advice in identifying trends and legal risks, providing recommendations on ways to support accommodations, promoting an accessible living-learning environment, and by contributing to the University's overall strategic plan. The incumbent advises University members on disability-related student accommodation matters to mitigate legal risk and support student wellness by playing an active role in policy development, cross-campus committees, and by collaborating with key stakeholders in supporting complex or litigious cases. The meaningful participation and inclusion of students with temporary, permanent, and suspected disabilities into campus life is fundamental to the mandate of the University since it is the foundation for personal and academic success.

### **Key Accountabilities**

#### **Strategic Leadership and Oversight**

- Provides leadership of the overall vision and strategy for AccessAbility Services. This involves designing, implementing and reviewing strategic plans for the department; establishing the mission, vision, and values for the department; and facilitating the alignment of these departmental 'statements of purpose' with those of the Institution, always in consideration of human rights law and Ministry standards.
- Provides overall management and administration of AccessAbility Services. This includes being accountable for fulfilling the University's legal duty to accommodate students with disabilities, as well as maintaining coordinated, integrated and high performing programs and services delivered within the unit. This entails program assessment, multi-disciplinary team management, and facilities management.
- Responsible for ensuring that the academic accommodations processes meet expectations of the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAEDS), Ontario Human Rights Commission, Inter-University Disability Issues Association (IDIA), Federal and Provincial Government, and University of Waterloo, and that services are of high quality and reflect well on the university.
- Applies leadership through the Supervisors for the operational integrity and ongoing evaluation of the clinical programs, procedures, and services of the department. These include evaluating and assessing medical health records; client screening through clinical assessments; client risk assessment and crisis management; accommodation consulting and facilitating; ethically/legally appropriate clinical documentation and reporting; and ensuring ongoing eligibility of students for services.
- Provides forward-thinking and tactical leadership by identifying trends for proactive rather than reactive responses to student needs and rights.
- Remains fully aware of trends within postsecondary education provincially, nationally and internationally and interpret how various external factors influence the University and AccessAbility Services.
- Provides leadership to the University by offering sound advice and input into the University's strategic plan, various pan-university strategic initiatives, and other cross-campus functions as it relates to accommodating students with disabilities and creating an accessible and inclusive learning environment (e.g. AODA committee, Undergraduate Operations committee).

#### **Expertise and Guidance on Meeting the Legal Duty to Accommodate (Compliance)**

- Subject matter expert in the legal duty to accommodate as per the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Ontario Human Rights Commission.
- Provides strategic advice on the balance of the duty to accommodate against undue hardship (as defined by the Ontario Human Rights Code) while providing guidance to the larger institution around identifying and mitigating legal risks.
- Proactively collaborates with the 6 Faculties to enable them to fulfil the legal duty to accommodate that balances student needs and academic integrity, particularly in complex and litigious situations.
- Direct link between Legal Counsel and the AccessAbility Services. Compiles evidence and relevant documentations from within AccessAbility Services to be used in litigation and at the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal. May serve as a witness representing the University at said Tribunals.
- Counsels on compliance under the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Ontario Human Rights Commission interpretation of the code, and other related laws and regulations.

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### **Financial Management, Reporting, and Assessment**

- Manage the unit's budget, which includes various sources of funding such as allocated per capita government grants, amounting to over \$1million. The Director will remain current on the budget's status as well as all changes in funding resources or potential resources.
- Responsible for providing annual financial and programming reports to both internal and external stakeholders, including the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development and the Student Services Advisory Committee.
- Responsible for the timely and accurate collection, analysis and reporting of relevant information (internal and external) for funding, continuous improvement of services, and to assist with campus- wide decision-making related to supporting accommodations and inclusive living-learning environments.
- Collaborate with other areas on campus to track student retention, performance and satisfaction as it relates specifically to students registered with AccessAbility Services.
- Use data gathered from various assessment methods and program evaluation to determine the direction of the department.

### **Human Resource Management**

- Overall responsibility for the AccessAbility Services unit, using collaborative approaches to direct the sub-departmental teams' objectives and performance, focusing on the department's and University-wide goals.
- Ensures resources are utilized optimally, through effective processes, task delegation, coordination and collaborative communication.
- Exceptional leadership and management of direct reports including hiring, coaching, staff performance management, professional development, salary administration, priority setting, strategic planning and ensuring the effective delivery and assessment of services.
- Provides ultimate oversight of a team of regulated professionals from various fields (Social Work, Occupational Therapy, Education). Guides the supervisors within AccessAbility Services in the effective management of their areas.
- Exercises exceptional skill in managing people and provides them with a productive and positive team-oriented work environment and career opportunities.
- Inspire and motivate a large inter-disciplinary team, using collaborative leadership approaches to build consensus.

### **Collaboration/ Building Strategic Partnerships**

- Collaborates with faculty, Associate Deans, Chairs, and program coordinators on complex cases related to students with disabilities or disabling conditions, which may include providing guidance and support related to: return to school planning, retroactive accommodations, accommodation disputes, and human rights complaints.
- Provides support to the clinical team when needed to help rectify accommodation disputes between faculty, students and their families.
- Manages sensitive and complex cases that have escalated beyond the unit, which may include human rights complaints, faculty grievances (as it relates to upholding student accommodations), and/or staff complaints.
- Work closely and in concert with students, instructors, Associate Deans, and various staff within other student support units (e.g. Health Services, Counselling Services, Student Awards, Housing, etc.) to facilitate an inclusive and accessible campus community and student experience. Participate when appropriate, in the decision-making processes of the other areas within Student Success, and across campus.
- Pursue and collaborate on external grants and other funding opportunities.
- Build strong positive relationships with appropriate and relevant external partners which include parents, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development, Inter-University Disability Issues Association (IDIA), and third-party service providers.
- Proactive and effective communications strategies with students and campus partners particularly related to issues that are sensitive or complex.

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- Ensure strategies are in place to research and understand the continuously evolving needs of students and supports required. With this information, the Director will develop highly effective and collaborative relationships within the student services portfolio as well as across campus to optimize service delivery to students. To do so, the incumbent will work to nurture a strong student-centered mindset within the unit and campus-wide to ensure services provided are of the highest quality and relevance.

### **Handling Sensitive Information**

- Ensure overall access to personal health information (documents and systems) and confidential/sensitive material are appropriately controlled.
- Ensure appropriate use and storage of confidential health and education records in accordance with University policy and relevant privacy legislation.
- Ensure the effective use of systems and technology to accurately and efficiently manage student medical information, including data accuracy and document integrity within student database and case-notes.
- Direct the return of clinical records to the intended party in a secure manner (appropriate storage and movement of confidential documents) when needed.

### **Education and Advocacy**

- Advises on the strategic direction of the University and related campus units, through consultation, a high-level of understanding of best practices in disability issues, and an acute understanding of the values and unique culture at University of Waterloo.
- Advocate for a positive and capabilities-focused, dignified and stigma-free appreciation of all individuals with disabilities while promoting campus awareness through committees, information dissemination, education and training.
- Support students to access University policies and processes, when appropriate.
- Educate academic and support units across campus regarding the role of the office and the university's legal duty to accommodate through presentations and meetings when appropriate.

*\*All employees of the University are expected to follow University and departmental health and safety policy, procedures and work practices at all times. Employees are also responsible for the completion of all health and safety training, as assigned. Employees with staff supervision and/or management responsibilities will ensure that assigned staff abide by the above, and actively identify, assess and correct health and safety hazards, as required.*

### **Required Qualifications**

#### **Education**

- Master's or Doctoral degree in a relevant field is required
- Certification or eligibility for certification by a regulated health profession within the province of Ontario (e.g., Clinical or School Psychology, Speech-Language Pathology, Occupational Therapy) is preferred

#### **Experience**

- 5+ years of progressive management experience
- Demonstrated leadership in strategic and tactical thinking, innovating, weighing risks and applying sound judgement to decision making
- Experience and ability to lead a multi-disciplinary and clinical team including registered health professionals is an asset
- Experience managing a budget
- Experience working with persons with disabilities
- Experience and/or training in supporting individuals in crisis and securing appropriate support.
- A background in developing and/or providing support services and programming to students with disabilities in a secondary or post-secondary school context is preferred

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- Experience working with databases and systems that supports the work of this unit is an asset.
- Experience working in a postsecondary institution or student-focused environment is preferred

### Knowledge/Skills/Abilities

- Demonstrated knowledge and application of human rights law as it pertains to accommodating persons with disabilities and other equity-deserving groups.
- Excellent communication (oral and written) skills. Specifically, an ability to communicate clearly, effectively, and appropriately with various stakeholders in a variety of formats, particularly in litigious and complex situations.
- Experience and ability to negotiate and mediate between diverse stakeholders with conflicting viewpoints is required.
- Superior organizational, problem-solving and interpersonal skills is required.
- Proven ability to provide solution-focused interventions.
- Proven ability to work independently and as a team member in a busy and inter-disciplinary environment.
- Proven ability to multi-task and manage competing deadlines and priorities.
- Awareness of various technical communication methods, web-related communication tools and operational/ strategic knowledge of information systems is preferred.

### Nature and Scope

- **Contacts:** The Director will coordinate and collaborate with most support units across campus, particularly Counselling Services, Health Services, Student Success, Registrar's Office (Student Awards), Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs, Housing & Residences, Cooperative Education, and Centre for Extended Learning. Key campus partners also include the six Faculties, including instructors, program coordinators, department Chairs, and Associate Deans. The Director will establish an expectation that all staff will work in a collaborative and coordinated way with students, staff and faculty. Moreover, the Director will represent the University, and when appropriate, collaborate with local community, region and provincial organizations and other educational institutions.
- **Level of Responsibility:** This position requires a high level of responsibility as the role is responsible for ensuring the complex execution and implementation of all disability-related accommodations for students with disabilities at the University of Waterloo. The position is responsible and accountable for the development and execution of all staff and student matters within the unit of AccessAbility Services, many of which are complex or litigious. The position is responsible for interpreting and applying human rights legislation in the academic environment. This position provides a high level of responsibility to the University through the mitigation of risk by enabling the legal duty to accommodate to be upheld in a manner that maintains academic integrity.
- **Decision-Making Authority:** This position has significant and ultimate decision-making authority for all accountabilities related to the unit, including the determination as to whether a student ought to be accommodated by the University, and what reasonable accommodations ought to be. Decisions are often required to be made quickly, in the absence of clear information or evidence, and without clear procedures or directives, which may pose consequences for the unit, the staff, the students, and the University's reputation. An inability to fulfil the University's legal duty to accommodate students with disabilities could result in disruption to a students' academic career, potential harm for the student, as well as the potential for a human rights compliant and reputational risks. The position is ultimately responsible for all decision-making related to the operation and administration of the office including, but not limited to: departmental strategic directions, staffing decisions, workload/priority management, effective creation and implementation of systems, protocols and processes, and risk management.
- **Physical and Sensory Demands:** This role in an office setting involves minimal physical demands and moderate sensory effort resulting in slight fatigue, strain, or risk of injury. Exposure to a fast-paced service-oriented environment with the need to pay attention to details as well to manage competing work demands.

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- **Working Environment:** The position is exposed to stress and pressure associated with administrative responsibilities in a clinical setting. It involves moderate psychological risk resulting from difficult and unavoidable exposure to disagreeable and uncomfortable environmental and psychological conditions. Risk of exposure includes: verbally and physically aggressive individuals; individuals dealing with a mental health crisis (including suicidal ideation and immediate risk of harm to self and others).

Located indoors in a comfortable, fast-paced office environment populated by clinical, administrative staff, as well as clients (University of Waterloo students, staff, faculty, and student family members). There may be unusual hours or schedules, multiple and/or tight deadlines beyond one's control and constant interruptions (e.g. phone calls, e-mails, urgent support requests, varying student volumes at different times of the year). Requires flexibility to occasionally shift working hours to include evenings or to accommodate required staffing levels.