

Job Description

Job Title:	Adaptive Educational Technologist
Department:	AccessAbility Services
Reports To:	Associate Director, Student Accommodation Services
Jobs Reporting:	None
Salary Grade:	USG 8
Effective Date:	June 2021

Primary Purpose

The Adaptive Education Technologist is accountable to the Associate Director Student Accommodation Services for the functional assessment, development, and coordination of individualized academic support plans incorporating a combination of adaptive technology, and learning strategy for students with disabilities, conditions and/or trauma registered with AccessAbility Services. The Adaptive Education Technologist is a Subject Matter Expert on adaptive technologies and learning strategies that mitigate the functional limitations of disability barriers in the academic environment and works to fulfill the mandate of the AccessAbility Services and the University's Duty to Accommodate in providing strategic support to students.

The Adaptive Education Technologist meets with individual students who require technological support and/or an intentional intervention strategy as part of an accommodation plan. The incumbent assesses medical documentation, psycho-educational assessments and conducts functional assessments with students, to explore how the disability or disabling condition affects access to learning and the learning environment. The incumbent applies this information, in combination with industry standards, and clinical judgement to design and facilitate an individualized adaptive technology supported accommodation plan. These plans incorporate the students' technology-related needs, training on the usage of adaptive technology and specific learning strategies, exploring funding options to offset associated costs, and providing hands-on training to the faculty supporting students with disabilities.

The Adaptive Education Technologist works closely with Accommodation Consultants and faculty to ensure adaptive technologies are aligned with academic accommodation plans and do not interfere with academic integrity and the essential requirements of a specific courses and/or program. Collaboration with other campus partners, including faculty, Academic Advisors, Centre for Teaching Excellence, Library, Centre for Extended Learning, Student Success Office and Information Systems & Technology is critical to providing support to both students and faculty.

Key Accountabilities

Assistive Technology Assessment, Matching and Authorizing to Support Student Learning

- Working individually with students with a broad range of disabilities, conditions and/or trauma to approve appropriate assistive technologies as part accommodations plan to enhance learning that complements the students' unique learning needs and their learning strategy plan.
- Reviewing and assessing student medical documentation and psycho-educational reports to determine appropriate technology supported courses of action to mitigate the disability impacts and to increase self- awareness of students' learning profiles, meta-cognitive practices, and strategies to increase the potential for academic success.

- Conducting functional assessments with students to select adaptive technology solutions to support their disability, functional limitations, learning style, and academic environment.
- Counselling students on the intersectionality of their disability, functional limitations, and learning styles within the academic environment.
- Authorizes purchases of equipment and software through bursary or other funding avenues by reviewing results of psycho-educational/cognitive/mental health assessments to ensure that they support eligibility.
- Collaborate with the Learning Strategist regarding students' learning needs.
- Following all legislative and university policy around and relevant to accommodations planning (e.g. AODA, Human Rights) and privacy.
- Provide AccessAbility Services' Accommodation Consultants regarding adaptive technologies, alternate format requirements and associated learning strategies as they relate to the development and updating of accommodation plans.

Individual Student Counselling on Accommodation planning

- Work directly with Accommodation Consultants to recommend, determine and implement appropriate academic and other accommodations to support and promote equal access to education.
- Consult and collaborate as appropriate with faculty, AccessAbility Services staff, academic units and student services to develop and implement the adaptive technologies recommended by students' documentation (i.e. psycho-educational assessments) and or through functional assessment.
- Collaborate with the Accommodation Consultants and faculty to ensure accommodations are appropriate for the course/program. If accommodation interferes with the essential requirements of a course/program, the Adaptive Educational Consultant may be called on to assist the Accommodation Consultant to negotiate with instructors and students to determine an alternative accommodation that will ensure the needs of the students are met, while maintaining course/program integrity.

Direct the Development of Adaptive Technology Workshops, Online Tools and other resources

- Develop new content, programs and initiatives that are in response to the needs and priorities of students and campus partners, and in line with the strategic priorities of AccessAbility Services that aim to promote and enhance student retention and success.
- Develop and facilitate and/or lead small group sessions/workshops on specific topics in an effort to support and enhance students' personal and academic success.
- Develop content for online support materials.
- Knowledgeable and up to date on the technology and learning strategy needs of students with disabilities including best practices at other institutions, current trends, and forecasting future development in both adaptive technology and course delivery to enhance student learning while meeting or exceeding industry benchmarks.
- Serve as a resource to University on matters related to adaptive technologies and accessibility for students with learning differences.
- Provides timely and accurate information for the continuous improvement of services based on program evaluations, trends, and service levels.

Equipment oversight

- Makes purchasing recommendations for upgrading, and the acquisition of new assistive equipment and software for the Exam Centre, Student Technology Lab, Alternate Format Production

Job Description



Workshop, the Assistive Technologies and Services Classroom, and the Student Equipment Loan Program.

- Evaluates assistive software and equipment for both accessibility and usability.
- Oversees the usage and operation of the Education & Technology Lab in AccessAbility Services and the equipment loan program.

Human Resource Management

- Hiring, training and performance management of casual staff (co-op and work-study students)
- Manages on-boarding and off-boarding of staff, ensuring appropriate accounts are created/deleted, maintains security (permission settings, alarm codes) and provides orientation and training related to office operational activities, policies, and relevant software systems
- Oversees the payroll process for casual employees and ensures that the AAS adheres to employment standards appropriate
- Exercises skill in managing people and providing them with a productive and positive team-oriented work environment.

Consultation and Liaising with Key Partners

- Maintaining strong positive relationships with external service providers, vendors, assistive technology companies and retailers of adaptive software and equipment. This involves developing and leveraging positive relationships with assistive technology companies for opportunities to pilot and evaluate new technologies to assist persons with disabilities.
- Communicates, collaborates and forms strategic partnerships with the library and others related to access enhancing technologies, alternate format, and student support.
- Collaborates with faculty to implement accommodations and student support and training.
- Maintaining strong positive relationships with internal partners, individuals, and committees to promote accessibility including the Centre for Extended Learning, Centre for Teaching Excellence, the Library, Human Resources, IST and ITMS.
- Working with campus partners to facilitate and/or lead small group sessions/workshops (Resource Room) on specific topics in an effort to support and enhance students' personal and academic success.
- Leverages positive relationships.

Handling Sensitive Materials

- Ensure access to secure documents are controlled appropriately.
- Ensure data accuracy and document integrity.
- Appropriately use and maintain confidential health and education records in accordance with University policy and relevant Privacy legislation.
- Effectively use systems and technology to accurately and efficiently manage student medical information.
- Direct the return of clinical records to the intended party in a secure manner (appropriate storage and movement of confidential documents) when needed.
- Maintains a current and accurate reflection of interactions with students through detailed case notes.

**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

- Graduate degree in Occupational Therapy, Special Education, or related degree in Rehabilitation Sciences or an assistive-technology related field is required.
- Certification by a regulated body within the province of Ontario is required.
- Assistive Technology Professional Certification is an asset.
- Assistive Devices Program Authorizer (Communication Aids) is a benefit.

Experience

- Experience performing assistive technology assessments for persons with disabilities, identifying technology, and facilitating learning through instruction.
- Experience with selecting and using assistive technology to support students in completing academic work that complements the students' unique learning needs and their learning strategy plan.
- Experience working within a student-focused, fast-paced, and high-stress student services environment (postsecondary preferred).
- Experience and/or training in supporting students in crisis and securing appropriate support.
- Experience managing sensitive materials and processes in a time and security-conscious setting.
- Experience managing human resources is an asset.

Knowledge/Skills/Abilities

- Demonstrated understanding of how the symptoms or functional limitations of a disability impact an individuals' daily functioning at the post-secondary level.
- Strong knowledge of the latest and most effective adaptive technologies for adult learners with disabilities.
- Proven ability to work independently without direction, as well as make determinations regarding outcomes of situation in absence of president or well-documented procedures.
- Demonstrated ability to make frequent and complex decisions.
- Demonstrated ability to work well under pressure with multiple deadlines.
- Demonstrated ability to contribute to and thrive in a collaborative environment and to apply a positive team approach to working with internal and external colleagues.
- Excellent communication skills (oral and written). Negotiation and mediation skills is an asset.
- Proven ability to provide solution-focused, student-centered, interventions.
- Ability to demonstrate flexibility, particularly in the decision-making process,
- Ability to remain objective in decision-making when presented with emotionally charged situations and when limited information is available
- Knowledge of AODA accessibility standards and web accessibility guidelines.

Nature and Scope

- **Contacts:** Internally, this position interacts regularly with other AccessAbility Services staff, many departments across campus (CEL, CTE, Library, IST), and the six faculty units. Externally, this position interacts with retailers of assistive technology, assistive technology companies, community partners and other service providers.
- **Level of Responsibility:** This role reports to the Associate Director Student Accommodation Services. This position is responsible and accountable for the complex execution and

implementation of all adaptive technology-related accommodations for students at the University of Waterloo. The Technologist is the subject matter expert on all matters of adaptive technology supported disability accommodations. The Technologist has extensive knowledge related to the Ontario Human Rights Commission and its Regulations as it relates to accommodations in the academic environment. The incumbent uses understandable legal and institutional context when advising students and the University to ensure the most relevant guidance. The incumbent exercises discretionary authority to provide advice and solutions to issues and concerns raised by members of the University community, often with little lead time. This position is responsible for approving Bursary applications after reviewing and verifying all documentation pertaining to a student's disability status to determine recommendations for technology. The incumbent has a high degree of access to confidential materials, and as a result is responsible for the secure and confidential management of student medical documentation. Responsible for managing resources (human resources, technology, budgets).

- **Decision-Making Authority:** Decision-making authority for all items outlined above. While the Clinical Documentation Specialist and Accommodation Consultant provide initial decision-making regarding whether students qualify for academic accommodations from AccessAbility Services, the Adaptive Education Technologist makes decisions concerning evidenced based practice and Ontario Human Rights Commission regulations to finalize the student's individualized adaptive technology accommodation plan and/or bursary application based on functional assessment, students' verbal reports, observations, and documentation review. The Technologist performs her/his duties conscientiously and responsibility, adhering to the ethics of their profession as well as the duty to accommodate under the OHRC. This position defers to the manager when decisions affect the departmental budget or strategic direction.
- **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.
- **Working Environment:** Involves moderate physical or psychological risk resulting from unavoidable exposure to hazardous, disagreeable or uncomfortable environmental conditions. This is due to higher than typical exposure to emotionally disturbing interactions with verbally and physically aggressive individuals, some dealing with a mental health crisis (including suicidal ideation and immediate risk of harm to self and others). Some after hours work may be required during peak times particularly in the weeks immediately before and after the start of each term and around bursary application deadlines.