

Student Accessibility Services

STUDENT HANDBOOK



St. Thomas
UNIVERSITY

Student Accessibility Services

St. Thomas University is committed to creating an equitable environment by ensuring that all members of our community have access to the full range of university life. This means supporting students with disabilities in their full participation in the educational, social and cultural life of our university.

Sharing responsibility with each student for their success, our accessibility program is consistent with our academic standards. We strive to make reasonable and appropriate accommodations to allow students to enjoy the benefits of higher education.

St. Thomas University welcomes students with disabilities and commits itself to work with each student to develop a program which will allow individual learning needs to be met.



Student Accessibility Services Office



The Student Accessibility Services (SAS) Office is located on the first floor of George Martin Hall in room 104. Our office is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 am until 4:30 pm.

Please feel free to contact us by email at accessibility@stu.ca. Our office is here to help and we are happy to answer any questions or concerns you may have. If you would like to book a one-one meeting with our office, please email us or stop by our office door and use the OR code provided.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Leanne Hutchins
Manager of Student Accessibility
506-460-0390

Bailey Gardner
Student Accessibility Advisor
506-453-7216

Meet The Accessibility Team

Leanne Hutchins

Manager of Accessibility Services

"I began my career at St. Thomas University in December 2021 working as a Student Accessibility Advisor. In July 2022 I gratefully took on the role of Manager of Accessibility Services. My educational background consists of a Bachelor of Philosophy and a Master of Science in Occupational Therapy.

Previously, I've worked in childcare, outdoor education, and working as an Occupational Therapist in both the public and private sector.

Transitioning to St. Thomas University has been a welcome breath of fresh air, and I find working with students incredibly rewarding. In my spare time you can find me paddling, napping, walking my two dogs and son, taking road trips, and eating delicious food."



Bailey Gardner

Student Accessibility Advisor

Bailey has a Bachelor of Arts in Criminology and Psychology with a minor in Sociology from STU (2013).

"During my time as a STUdent, I have experienced the support, encouragement, and friendly atmosphere that the STU community has to offer. Within my role, I hope to provide you with the same positive experience and assist students with permanent and/or temporary disabilities navigate and succeed in their university careers.

"I am here to meet with you one-on-one to discuss your accommodation needs and develop an individualized accommodation plan that works best for you! My goal is to create a supportive and comfortable environment to answer any questions you may have regarding accommodations that we offer, the use of adaptive technology, resources that are available and so much more. I look forward to hearing from you!"

What We Do

Student Accessibility Services (SAS) provides academic accommodations and support to students who provide documentation for such a need from a licensed health or mental health care professional in order to reduce barriers to education. It is important to remember, accommodations do not give an 'unfair advantage' to students who use our services, nor do they modify the University's academic standards. Students with disabilities are only given the accommodations necessary to equalize their chances of learning success with the students who do not require such accommodations.

Why We Do This

At St. Thomas University, we believe that every student should have equal opportunities to succeed academically. Our duty to accommodate is a legal principle and a requirement dictated by Canadian Human Rights legislation. As a result, it is not only the University's legal obligation to provide academic accommodations when these accommodations are required and documented by a licensed health or mental health care professional but it is our pleasure to assist students with disabilities to achieve their academic goals.



Qualifying For Our Services

Any student at St. Thomas University may qualify for accommodations, as long as they have documentation proving a disability or disorder from a licensed health or mental health care professional. These may include but are not limited to:

- Physician
- Medical specialist
- Psychologist
- Psychiatrist
- Speech/Language Pathologist
- Occupational Therapist
- Audiologist

Documentation provided by a health care professional must validate the disability and have been completed within five years of requiring accommodations. Documentation older than five years is at the discretion of the Student Accessibility Services Office.

If a student does not currently have documentation our office is able to provide them with a **Verification of Accommodation Form** to be fill out by a licensed health or mental health professional.



Disabilities and Diagnosis

There are many disabilities/diagnoses which may allow students to take advantage of our services and/or academic accommodations. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Acquired Brain Injury
- Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD)
- Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Deaf, Deafened, Hard of Hearing, or Hearing Impaired
- Mental Health Disorders
- Low Vision, Blindness, Visually Impaired
- Certain Chronic Medical Conditions
- Mobility/Functional (includes physical, mobility and neurological disabilities)

Temporary Accommodations

Students may register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to receive accommodations for a temporary disability. Documentation supporting the need for temporary accommodations must come from a licensed health or mental health professional and include information pertaining to the duration of the disability. Students requiring temporary accommodations will be required to return to the SAS office each semester to provide updated documentation and to have their accommodations reviewed and reinstated if required.

Student Success Coach

St. Thomas University provides a full-time Student Success Coach to assist students with a variety of academic skills. These can include helping students organize and prioritize conflicting demands, create a study schedule, manage procrastination tendencies, improve note-taking and reading comprehension, and prepare for test and exams. Students may access one-on-one meetings with out Student Success coach by appointment or take part in weekly group workshops. For more information, please contact Kathleen Hyndman by email at khyndman@stu.ca.

Mental Health Services

St. Thomas University has as full time Mental Health Coordinator who is here to offer drop in counseling , mental health related workshops and provide resources for mental health services available to students. For more information or additional resources, please contact Brittany Sprague by email at bsprague@stu.ca.

Every person and situation is unique; therefore, we all have different needs and preferences for mental health care. Our model organizes resources and services into three categories:

Self Care

- Reading
- Meditation
- Watching an informational video

Care with Others

- Peer support
- Workshops or training
- Groups and programs

Care from Professionals

- Guided self-help
- Counseling
- Specialized services

What Accommodations Do We Provide?

Student Accessibility Services provides students with a wide array of individualized learning accommodations and services in order to help reduce barriers to education. All accommodations are delivered and facilitated in collaboration with course professors. It is important to remember, not all accommodations are offered to every student; students are only offered the specific accommodations they require due to their disability and supporting documentation.

Some accommodations and services may include, but are not limited to:

- Access to assistive technology
- Access to large print, taped or braille materials
- FM system to support hearing impaired students
- Sign language interpreters (government funded)
- Assistance with grant applications
- Note taking services
- Test/midterm/exam accommodations
- Tutors for general academic success (government funded)
- Time management skills training
- Other individually tailored accommodations as required



Receiving academic accommodation does not modify course standards or lower academic performance expectations on the part of students professors. Our offices unified approach to all students ensures that no record of your accommodations will appear on your diplomas or transcripts.

Registering with Us

Students that are eligible for academic accommodations should contact our office as soon as possible. **If you are planning to attend STU in September, please contact us during the spring or summer before your arrival.** This will allow you adequate time to gather the necessary documentation and reduce stress during a busy transition to university studies.

You will need to provide SAS with documentation of a disability from a licensed health or mental health care professional. If you do not already have documentation our office may provide you with a **Verification of Accommodation Form** to be completed by your healthcare provider.

You will be required to complete an **Intake Form**, which provides our office with your contact information, accommodation background, and other important information.

During registration you will meet with SAS staff and together, you will create a detailed accommodation plan based on the recommendations made by your licensed health or mental health care professional. Once you are happy with your accommodation plan and with your permission, your accommodation plan will be shared with your professors. **Please note: your accommodation plan may be modified at any time to better suit your accommodation needs.**

Orientation Workshop — *Ease Your Mind*

Are you anxious about coming to university?

Do you have or suspect you may have a disability or mental health diagnosis?

If so, you may be eligible to participate in Ease Your Mind. A one-day pre-orientation Welcome Week workshop, geared towards students with disabilities who are new to STU.

Ease Your Mind allows students to:

- Be on campus before Welcome Week starts to minimize the anxiety of a new environment.
- Meet the Student Services team that will support you throughout the academic year.
- Learn about Student Accessibility Services and how we can support you throughout your academic career.
- Plan and organize your semester with our Student Success Coach
- Learn how to reduce and manage anxiety throughout the school year.
- Have the opportunity to meet fellow STU-dents and start building friendships.
- If you plan to live in residence, you may have the opportunity to move in a day early!
- Get a taste of a day in the life at STU! Including having lunch in our Geroge Martin Dining Hall.



For more information on Ease Your Mind or to register for this event, please contact our office by email at [**admissions@stu.ca**](mailto:admissions@stu.ca)

Accommodations

Note-Taking

Student Accessibility Services offers electronic note-taking through an app-based software called Glean. Glean allows students to record lectures in real time, playback recordings at their own pace and transcribe audio recordings into text.

Glean allows students to add their own notes at any time. This includes highlighting important information, flagging information for tests, and inserting their own typed notes into their recordings.

SAS will require students to sign a Glean Recording Agreement prior to their enrollment in the app. Recordings are not able to be exported from the Glean App however, this agreement ensures that all recordings are not shared between students.

Test/Exam Invigilation

Students with testing accommodations can request to write quizzes, tests, midterms and exams through the SAS Office. Our office will provide you with a digital Exam Request form.

Please note: if a student's disability prevents them from writing more than one exam per day, it is the student's responsibility to negotiate alternate exam times with their professor.

The University expects all students to be informed and comply with all policies and procedures on exam accommodations.

Accommodations

Tutoring

Tutoring offered through SAS is for help with general academic skills, such as organization, time management, studying, writing, editing, etc.

Only students who are successful in obtaining government funding are eligible for this support. Please note, without funding our office is still able to recommend services through St. Thomas University which may assist with the above academic skills.

Tutors are matched with students based on a number of factors, including but not limited to educational background, instructional strengths and availability.

Other

Additional accommodations are available through our office as required. These accommodations may include but not limited to:

- Occasional unanticipated absences.
- Use of technology during class.
- Use of stimulation aids during class.
- Alternative methods to course requirement.



For more information regarding other accommodations and services offered by Student Accessibility Services, please email accessibility@stu.ca

Canada Student Grant for Students with Disabilities

The Canada Study Grant (CSG) is a financial assistance program available through the Government of Canada to help support full and part-time students with permanent disabilities.

To be eligible for CSG funding you must apply for a Canada Student Loan AND qualify for at least one dollar (\$1) of a Federal Student Loan. Your CSG application will require sufficient documentation of your disability.

The Canada Student Grant helps to cover the cost of necessary equipment, software, and accommodation services, such as:

- Laptop or tablet
- Noise cancelling headphones
- Grammarly (softwear)
- Tutoring (outside our peer-tutoring program)

Depending on your province of residence, the CSG funding may be distributed in collaboration with STU or directly to you. Feel free to contact our office or visit Canada.ca and search "Canada Student Grant" for more information.

We do ask that all students who are registered with our office apply for the CSG. If students are not eligible for CSG funding, our office will continue to offer non-government funded accommodations and support.

Confidentiality

The SAS team takes confidentiality very seriously and will make every effort to keep our services confidential. We fully understand and respect the issues of privacy and confidentiality regarding students who access our services.

Registered students personal information is accessed by SAS staff only. With only relevant information being shared with other Student Services staff on a need-to-know basis.

A consent form must be signed by the registered student to disclose any information to other University staff and/or outside parties (such as family members or other individuals). Consent forms are available at SAS.

A student's diagnosis, specific disability, or other personal information is never revealed to student employees (i.e. exam invigilators, note-takers, or tutors). These employees are given only enough instruction to facilitate these accommodations. All of our employees have signed confidentiality agreements and understand the seriousness of this issue. A breach in confidentiality may be sufficient cause for immediate dismissal and possibly other disciplinary action.

In addition, professors are NOT informed of the nature of a student's disability or diagnosis, or regarding the student's relationship with SAS. Professors will only be advised of the accommodations that a student requires.