

# **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](mailto: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-on-one meeting with our office, please email us or stop by our office door and use the QR code provided. We look forward to hearing from you!

### Contact Us

**[accessibility@stu.ca](mailto:accessibility@stu.ca)**

**Manager of Student Accessibility**  
506-460-0390 | GMH 306

**Student Accessibility Advisor**  
506-453-7216 | GMH 104



## 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 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 also 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
- Nurse Practitioner

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 filled 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.

## What Accommodations Do We Provide?

Student Accessibility Services provides students with a wide array of individualized learning accommodations and services 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 office's unified approach to all students ensures that no record of your accommodations will appear on your diplomas or transcripts.

# Accommodations

## Note-Taking Support

Student Accessibility Services offers both an electronic and peer note-taking service, depending on which note-taking support works best for each individual student.

Our electronic note-taking app, Genio, allows students to record lectures in real time, playback recordings at their own pace and transcribe audio recordings into text. Students are able to add their own typed notes, class slides, handouts, task lists and more, into their recorder lectures during and after class times.



SAS does require students to sign a Genio Recording Agreement prior to their enrollment in the app. Recordings are not able to be exported from the Genio App; however, this agreement ensures that all recordings are not shared between students and personal conversations are not being recorded.

Peer note-taking is provided to students who do not find the electronic note-taking services to be helpful, and/or are enrolled in courses that are not sufficiently supported by Genio (ex: language courses). Peer note-takers are required to provide typed, detailed and organized notes in a timely manner and through our confidential electronic system to registered students who require peer note-taking support.

If you believe you may require peer note-taking services, please contact our office as soon as possible. We are not able to guarantee a peer note-taker can be provided; however, with efficient notice we will do our best to have someone available at the beginning of your courses.

## Test/Exam Invigilation

Students with testing accommodations can request to write quizzes, tests, midterms, and exams through the SAS Office through their Accommodate Portal. Students can login to their Accommodate Portal at [stu-accommodate.symplicity.com](http://stu-accommodate.symplicity.com). We recommend all tests be scheduled with our office as early in the semester as possible to guarantee a spot and invigilator will be available. Tests booked within one week (7 days) of the test date are not guaranteed to be accommodated.



Please note: if a student's disability prevents them from writing more than one exam per day, or completing an exam/test at the regular scheduled time, it is the student's responsibility to negotiate alternate exam or test times with their professor and the SAS Office.

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

## Other

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

- Occasional unanticipated absences.
- Negotiated extensions.
- 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](mailto:accessibility@stu.ca).



## 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.

If you wish to become registered with our services, you will be required to complete our Accommodation Request Form which can be accessed here: [stu-accommodate.symphonicity.com/public\\_accommodation/](https://stu-accommodate.symphonicity.com/public_accommodation/).

Here you will have the opportunity 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 also be asked to provide your contact information, accommodation background and other important information.

Once you have completed an Accommodation Request Form and provided documentation to the SAS Office, we will be in contact with you to set up an Intake meeting with our services. During your Intake meeting you will meet with SAS 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 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.
- Learn how to plan and organize your semester.
- Learn how to reduce and manage anxiety throughout the school year.
- Have the opportunity to meet fellow STUdents 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 George Martin Dining Hall.

For more information on Ease Your Mind, please contact our office by email at [accessibility@stu.ca](mailto: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 packages
- Noise canceling headphones
- Grammarly (software)
- 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](https://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.





# Additional STU Resources

## Mental Health Services

St. Thomas University has a full-time Mental Health Coordinator who is here to offer drop-in counseling services, mental health related workshops and provide resources for mental health services available to students. For more information or additional resources, please contact the Mental Health Coordinator at [mentalhealth@stu.ca](mailto:mentalhealth@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





## Writing Centre

The STU Writing Centre offers free online or in-person, one-on-one consultations to students at all levels and stages of the writing process. The Writing Centre does not help you compose, re-write or proof-read assignments. Instead, they work with you to help you become a better writer.

The Writing Centre can help you:

- understand your writing assignment
- organize your thoughts and develop a writing strategy
- plan and improve your assignments
- use different writing styles
- properly cite sources and format papers
- learn how to do more effective library research
- strengthen your writing skills



## Smart Start Team

The Smart Start Team is here to help students build sustainable learning strategies to develop a foundation for long-term success throughout their academic degree. Team members are upper-year students who are trained to support peers in core success strategies that include time management, study habits, research approaches and navigating university resources.



The goal of the Smart Start Team is to make academic support more approachable and accessible to all students. They will do so by hosting peer led study sessions all over campus with no registration required. This is the perfect opportunity to build good study habits, get support from other students and be around others who are working together to organize and manage their semester.

# 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 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.

## Contact Us

[accessibility@stu.ca](mailto:accessibility@stu.ca)

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