

Job Description

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

Primary Purpose

The Learning Strategist is accountable to the Associate Director Accommodation Services for the clinical assessment, development, and coordination of individualized learning strategy and academic recovery plans for students with disabilities, conditions and/or trauma registered with AccessAbility Services. The Learning Strategist is a Subject Matter Expert on learning strategies and supports that mitigate the functional limitations of disability barriers in the academic environment.

The strategist will be responsible for developing, coordinating and delivering strategies and programs designed to promote and enhance student's success. Using teaching and learning strategies and best practice research in student retention, engagement and development practices, he/she will work closely with the Manager Student Services, Manager Student Accommodations, Adaptive Educational Technologist and Accommodations Consultants to respond to the needs of students with disabilities and work to fulfill the mandate of the AccessAbility Services and the University's Duty to Accommodate in providing strategic support to students.

The strategist meets with individual students who require an intentional intervention strategy as part of an accommodation plan. The incumbent assesses medical documentation, psycho-educational assessments and conducts clinical interviews 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 learning strategy and/or academic recovery plan. The Learning Strategists works closely with Accommodation Consultants and faculty to ensure learning strategies 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, Counselling Services, Health Services, Student Success Office and the Writing Centre is critical to providing holistic support to students.

Key Accountabilities

Learning Strategy and Skills Development

- Working individually with students with a broad range of disabilities, conditions and/or trauma to provide learning strategies, study skills, academic intervention/recovery plans, and education
- Reviewing and assessing student medical documentation and psycho-educational reports to determine appropriate course of action to support learning needs and outcomes and to increase self-awareness of students' learning profiles, meta-cognitive practices, and strategies to increase the potential for academic success.

- Conducting bio-psycho-social interviews with students to base learning strategy and academic intervention/recovery plans on their disability, learning style, and academic environment.
- Counselling students on the intersectionality of their learning style as it relates to their disability
- Collaborate with the Adaptive Technologist regarding students' learning needs.
- Directing students in possible applications of educational software/hardware that may enhance their learning.
- Following all legislative and university policy around and relevant to accommodations planning (e.g. AODA, Human Rights) and privacy.
- Provide AccessAbility Services' Accommodation Consultants updates regarding learning strategies and academic recovery plans of students.

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 accommodations recommended by students' documentation (i.e. psycho-educational assessments).
- 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 Learning Strategist 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 Learning Strategy 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 learning strategy needs of students with disabilities including best practices at other institutions, current trends, and forecasting future development in strategies to enhance student learning while meeting or exceeding industry benchmarks.
- Serve as a resource to University on matters related to learning strategies for students with learning differences.
- Assist with special events and other services offered through the office.

Collaboration with Partners

- Developing and leveraging positive and professional relationships within the AccessAbility Services unit and with appropriate on and off campus stakeholders.
- Utilize proactive, professional and effective communications strategies with students registered with the office as well as the general student body, parents, instructors and other key stakeholders as appropriate.

Handling Sensitive Materials

- Ensure access to secure documents are controlled appropriately.

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- 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 Education, or Rehabilitation Sciences required. Special Education designation is preferred.
- Individual must be registered with a professional college/society recognized in Ontario

Experience

- Experience in a student-focused (secondary or post-secondary school context) environment.
- Experience providing accommodations, academic support, or services to persons with disabilities, preferably postsecondary students with disabilities.
- Proven experience as a learning strategist implementing education in a post-secondary environment.
- 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.

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 learning strategies.
- 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

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- **Contacts:** Internally, this position interacts regularly with the other AccessAbility Services staff, many departments across campus (Campus Writing Centre, Student Success Office, Counselling Services, Health Services, Centre for Teaching Excellent, Centre for extended Learning, etc.) and the six faculty units. Externally, this position may interact with external agencies and/or practitioners.
 - **Level of Responsibility:** This role reports to the Associate Director Student Accommodation Services. This position is responsible and accountable for the complex design, execution and implementation of all disability-related learning strategy accommodations for students at the University of Waterloo. The Learning Strategist is the subject matter expert on all matters of learning strategy accommodations for disability. The Strategist 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. 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.
 - **Decision-Making Responsibility:** Decision-making authority for all items outlined above. While the Clinical Documentation Specialist and Accommodation Consultant provide the initial decision-making regarding whether students qualify for academic accommodations from AccessAbility Services, the Learning Strategist makes decisions concerning evidenced based practice and Ontario Human Rights Commission regulations to finalize the components of the student's individualized learning strategy accommodation as part of the overall accommodation plan based on students' verbal reports, observations, and documentation review. The Strategist performs her/his duties conscientiously and responsibility, adhering to the ethics of their profession as well as the duty to accommodate under the OHRC. Overly complex cases are escalated to the Manager, Student Services.
 - **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 weekend and after hour work is required during peak times.