Accessibility in the Classroom

Rachel Desjourdy
Access & Inclusion Officer, Interim OSD Exam Centre Manager
What is the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD)?

The Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) provides support services and reasonable accommodations to undergraduate, graduate and postdoctoral students with documented disabilities of either a permanent, temporary, or episodic nature.

We foster an accessible and inclusive university experience for McGill’s diverse student population in collaboration with other Student Services and the wider McGill community through resources and services.
Registrations with the OSD
What does disability “look” like?

93% of people with disabilities don't use a wheelchair.
Who can register with the OSD?

- Mental health disorder: 37%
- Organic impairment: 13%
- Motor impairment: 4%
- Visual impairment: 1%
- Autism spectrum disorders: 1%
- Learning disability: 11%
- Attention Deficit Disorder: 16%
- Multiple impairment: 16%

*Based on internal OSD statistics from 2017-18 school year*
What services do we offer?

Accommodations are based on **BARRIERS** and may include:

- Individualized Case Support
- Exam accommodations
- Note taking
- Learning Resources
- Assistive Technology
- Alternate Text
Shifting the Conversation

Diagnoses

Barriers
Have you ever had to deal with an accessibility concern as a teaching staff?

THINK – PAIR - SHARE
Accommodations

The Office for Students with Disabilities addresses the barriers that students experience in their academic environment. We rely on collaborations with our campus partners, including faculty and teaching staff, to work collectively to promote accessibility. By planning with accessibility in mind, we can work more sustainably.
COULD YOU PLEASE SHOVEL THE RAMP?

ALL THESE OTHER KIDS ARE WAITING TO USE THE STAIRS. WHEN I GET THROUGH SHOVELING THEM OFF, THEN I WILL CLEAR THE RAMP FOR YOU.

BUT IF YOU SHOVEL THE RAMP, WE CAN ALL GET IN!
Disclosure – what it means to be registered with OSD

• Student has met with an advisor at the OSD
• Student has provided valid medical documentation of a documented disability, mental health issues, or chronic health condition
• Experiences barriers in their academic environment that are supported by the medical documentation
Barriers and Accommodations

Barriers that students experience can be categorized by three different environments:

1. In the classroom
2. On myCourses
3. In the exam setting
4. Studying/homework
Barriers in the Classroom

Examples:
• In class participation
• Class attendance
• Public speaking
• Accessing visual information
• Simultaneous note taking

Approaches:
• speaking in class, participation on discussion boards, handwritten reflections
• Equitable absence policies for all
• Options for presenting information: pre-recorded video presentations, small group presentations, alternate formats
• Foster collective note sharing through myCourses platform
• Allowing the use of note-taking tools (i.e. laptops, tablets, smart pens)
Accessible PowerPoints and Presentations

- **Microsoft Accessibility Training (FREE!)**
- Contrast between the font and the background
- **Serif** vs. **Sans Serif** font
  - Calibri and Verdana
- Large point (14 pt)
- Turn on closed captioning on video material
For someone with vision impairment, this could be very difficult to read.

Low contrast may make this hard to see as well.
to give an opportunity for students who thrive on different...
Barriers on myCourses

• Accessible PDF documents
• Accessible Word documents
• myCourses settings
Importance of accessible content in myCourses

• "Reading" may be different from student to student. Some read using screen-readers or other technology.

• By uploading accessible content in myCourses, you increase access for students with disabilities and many others.

• A variety of different students can experience similar barriers to learning.
  • Example: difficulty processing a 20-page reading assignment before the next class session

- Commuter student
- Student with a learning disability
- Second language learner
- Student with depression
- Concussed student athlete
Screen reader working
Screen reader failing
Screen-reader friendly course readings

Make your content accessible on myCourses by:

a) Linking to eBooks and journal articles available through McGill Library

b) Scanning on uPrint using Optical Character Recognition (OCR) settings (instructions)

c) Using OCR-friendly flatbed scanners in McGill Library

d) Using free OCR apps
   • Office Lens (syncs with Office 365)
   • DocScanner (convert to OCR within app)
   • Scannable (Evernote product)
Uploading accessible documents

• Upload original versions of PowerPoint and Word documents instead of converting to PDF
  • [Sample instructions for quickly removing notes from PowerPoints](#)

• When creating PowerPoint and Word documents:
  • Use Microsoft Office's built-in templates / layouts
  • Avoid text boxes
  • Use the headings when creating documents

• [Microsoft Sway](#) is accessible, Prezi is not
Use myCourses' accessibility checker

The accessibility checker is available with the HTML editor, e.g.:

- When creating Announcements
- When creating an HTML file in Content
- When posting in Discussions
- When providing written feedback on Assignments

- Accessibility issues are flagged and you can be redirected to W3C solutions pages
Create a File in "Weekly readings"

Accessibility Checker

Issue 1 of 1

The selected text appears to be a list. Lists should be formatted using a list tag.

Ignore  Previous Issue  Next Issue
Other built-in accessibility features in myCourses

• Explain (or use!) the built-in accessibility features of myCourses
myCourses accessibility features
Barriers in an Exam

- Processing speed
- Physical access
- Episodic conditions
- Attention/focus
- Self-regulation

- Timing
- Alternate formats
- Use of a computer
- Breaks
Exam Accommodations with OSD

1. Professor assigns a test/quiz
2. Student (registered with OSD) signs up a min 7 days in advance using online form
3. OSD Exam Office contacts professor to:
   - Verify information about exam is correct (i.e. date, time, length of exam)
   - Submit a copy of their exam to the OSD Exam Centre 3 days in advance
4. OSD proctors the exam
5. OSD arranges for pick up or delivery of the exam

What not to do:
- Assign or change an exam date with < 7 days notice (including make up)
- Ignore the emails from exams.osd@mcgill.ca
- Submit your exam to our office less than 3 days in advance
Take Home Exams

Students who are eligible for exam accommodations with the OSD, who have been assigned a take-home exam:

• IF the class has been given **less than 48 hrs** to complete the take-home, their exam accommodations should apply
• IF the class has been given **MORE than 48 hrs** to complete the take-home exam, no addition time is applied
Other resources

• **Learning Resources with the OSD**
  • Topics include: time management, stress management, and test-taking skills
  • Webinars throughout the semester, online repository of tools
  • App suggestions
  • [https://mcgill.ca/osd/student-resources/learningresources/test-taking](https://mcgill.ca/osd/student-resources/learningresources/test-taking)

• **Counselling Services**
  • Workshops: Skills for Managing Exam Anxiety, Skills for Managing Anxiety & Stress
  • [https://www.mcgill.ca/counselling/workshops](https://www.mcgill.ca/counselling/workshops)
Barriers to Homework and Studying

• Processing
• Episodic disabilities
What you might receive from the OSD:

• Letter of confirmation of OSD registration
  This is sent at the student’s request to let you know that they are registered with the OSD.
  No action required.

• Letter of accommodation
  This is sent at the student’s request in order to facilitate the following accommodations:
  - Flexibility in assignment deadlines
  - Occasional absences
  - The use of a laptop in class (note taking)
  - Advanced access to course material
FAQs

Do you have any questions?
Will the OSD registration appear on my transcript?

• No! Registration with the OSD is confidential
  • Disclosure to others is the student’s choice
  • Documentation stays on file at the OSD
Where is the OSD advising office?

1010 Sherbrooke St. West
Suite 410
Montreal, Quebec
H3A 2R7

Find us on Google Maps!
Where is the OSD exam centre?

Redpath Library Building, Suite RS56
3459 McTavish Street
Montreal, Quebec
H3A 0C9

Find us on Google Maps!
How else can the OSD support me in my role?

- Accessibility supports from our Universal Access team
  - Physical environment
  - Social environment
  - Print and online media
  - General consultations

Rachel Desjourdy
Access & Inclusion Officer

Gift Tshuma
Universal Access Advisor

Timothy Swiffen
Access Technologist
# Contact Us

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