



Introduction

The School of Physical and Occupational Therapy is committed to offering accessible learning environments, to working collaboratively with students and the [*Student Accessibility and Achievement \(SAA\)*](#), and to removing barriers students might be experiencing in their academic or clinical learning environments. These actions are based on the framework of Universal Design for Learning and reasonable accommodations. The principles of [Universal Design for Learning](#) refer to optimizing teaching and learning for all learners including physical aspects of learning spaces, teaching and learning materials and the development of a curriculum.

All accommodations must respect the requirement that students attain essential skills, attributes and core competencies required for successful program completion and professional practice. Please refer to Essential Skills and Attributes documents for [Occupational Therapy](#) and [Physical Therapy](#). Accommodations are considered reasonable, as long as they do not prevent evaluation of essential skills, attributes and competencies, and do not cause undue burden to the School.

Outlined below are some guiding principles and processes for students from the School who experience barriers in their academic courses or clinical courses (e.g. clinical placement). The principles and processes are guided by the social model of disability (or ICF – International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health), in which barriers are identified by the student based on their situation and context. Barriers may relate to but are not limited to learning disabilities, mental or physical health conditions, anxiety, ADHD, and chronic illnesses.

Who should I contact if I am experiencing barriers in my learning environment?

Students experiencing barriers in their learning environments should [contact the SAA](#) to schedule an initial meeting with an Access Adviser. During the initial meeting, the student and the Access Adviser will engage in a discussion to identify and reduce barriers the student is experiencing in their learning

environment as well as possible barriers they may experience in future learning environments (e.g. clinical courses). The process for determining accommodations is a collaborative one and is based on the individual strengths and barriers that the student is experiencing.

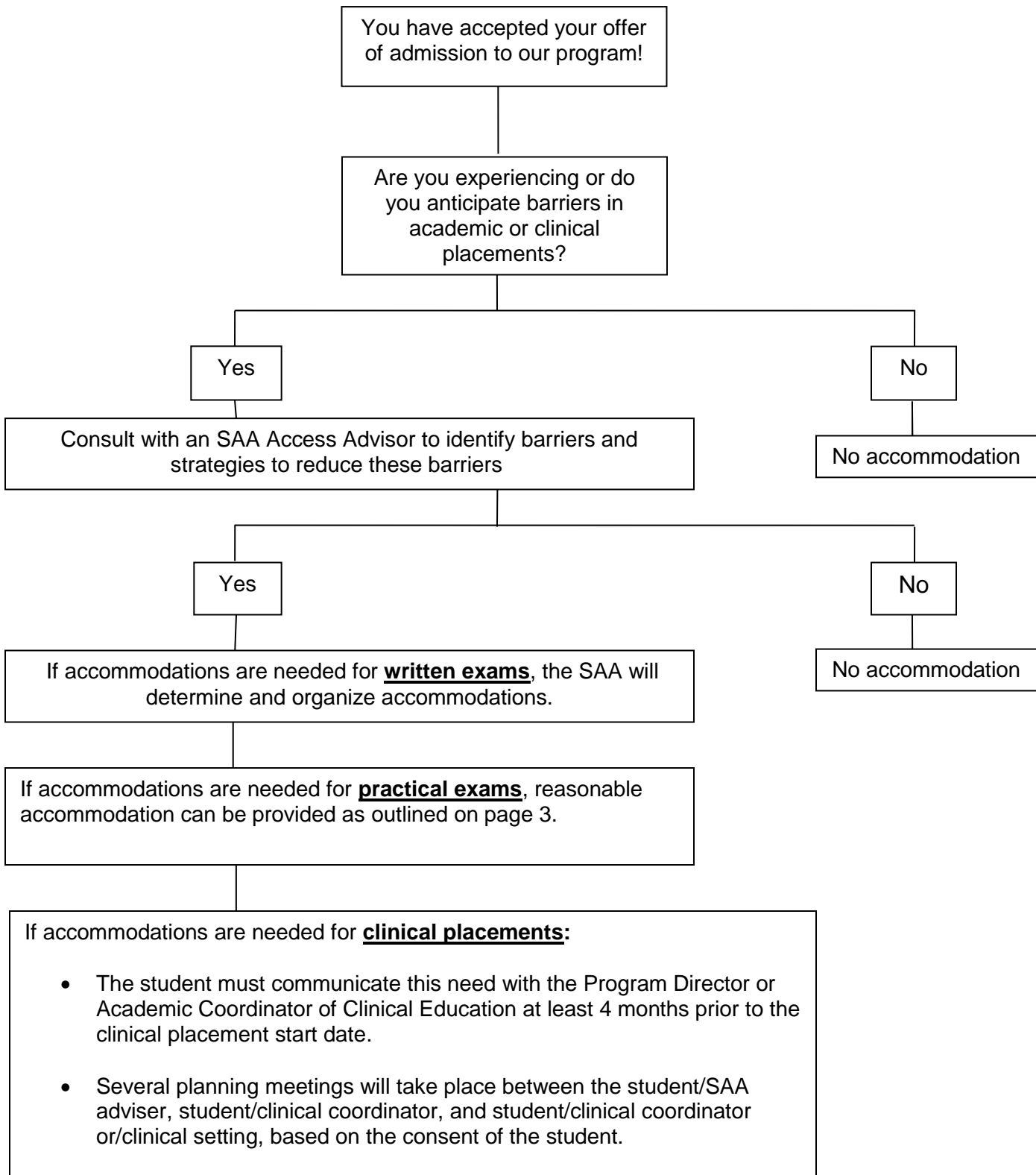
What are the recommended actions and time frame?

Registration with the SAA is confidential, if a student consents, the student can also plan a meeting with the appropriate faculty member to discuss their accommodations (e.g. course instructor, Program Director, clinical coordinator). Accommodations for written exams are organized directly by the SAA. Students who wish to be accommodated during a clinical course or who require accommodations for a practical exam should consult with the SAA. The SAA will then facilitate a dialogue between all three parties (student, SAA, faculty) to determine how to best reduce barriers.

It is the student's responsibility to contact the SAA in a timely manner. For on-campus courses, students are encouraged to identify and address any barriers as soon as they have received their acceptance to the University. For clinical placements, students should contact SAA and the clinical education team at least 4 months before the start date of a clinical placement. This advanced planning will help ensure that students are provided with appropriate accommodation process to access their learning environments.

If a student does not contact the SAA within the time frames mentioned above, it may not be possible to provide the student with accommodations or remove barriers for an academic or clinical course. If withdrawal or cancellation of the course is necessary, the student's progression in the program could be delayed, as many courses must be taken sequentially. The flow chart provided below summarizes the key steps for students.

Flow Chart - Student Access and Barriers



Accommodations for Practical Exams

The SAA, School of Physical and Occupational Therapy and the Steinberg Centre for Simulation and Interactive Learning have approved a set of reasonable accommodations for practical examinations, also known as OSCEs (Objective Structured Clinical Exam). These accommodations will optimize student performance, while still allowing evaluation of essential skills, attributes and core competencies required for successful program completion and professional practice.

For all students registered with the SAA and requiring accommodations for a given practical exam, the following accommodations can be authorized by an SAA advisor:

- For exams with 6 or more stations, a rest break can be scheduled every 3-4 stations. The duration of the break is determined by the exam organizers based on the setup of the exam. For exams with 5 stations or less, breaks in between stations are not available.
- PT students may be given additional time as an accommodation to read the scenario and/or questions for each station. For example, 3 minutes may be allotted if the reading/preparation time is 2 minutes.

In line with principles of Universal Design for Learning, OT students' additional time has been built in to the exam to read the scenario and/or questions for each station.

Additional time is not applied to simulated patient encounters for both OT and PT students.

Should these accommodations not meet your disability-related needs, please reach out to SAA.

- Modifications to physical requirements that are expected of students are possible provided that they do not affect the course learning objectives,

activities, assessments or examinations. Note that documentation of the specific student needs must be provided to SAA.

Students requiring accommodations for their practical examinations must register to take their exam using the SAA's Exam Sign Up Form by the end of the first month of the semester. The faculty will retrieve the information from the SAA.

If a student's registration with the SAA or request for accommodations occurs later than one month after the start of class, accommodations will be implemented if possible but cannot be guaranteed. Apart from physical modifications (third bullet above), requests for individualized modifications to the exam process or timing will not be possible.