

**The Role of Disability Service Professionals in
Determining Essential Requirements
at the Post-Secondary Level**

Inter-University Disability Issues Association
Working Document
Passed November 5, 2004

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Forward</i>	2
<i>Section 1: Principles and Policies</i>	3
1.0. What is an Essential Requirement?	3
1.1. Undue Hardship	3
1.2. Roles and Responsibilities	4
1.2.1. Student with A Disability	4
1.2.2. Post-Secondary Institution	5
1.2.3. Faculty and Staff	5
1.2.4. Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD)	5
1.2.5. Outside Placement Agency (Field Practicum)	6
<i>Section 2: Process to Determine Essential Requirements</i>	7
Step 1: Accommodation Request	7
Step 2: Reviewing Accommodation Request with OSD and Student	7
Step 3: Reviewing Accommodation Request with Student, OSD, Instructor and/or Field Supervisor	7
Step 4: Handling the Denial of Accommodation Request	8
<i>Conclusion</i>	10
<i>Appendix I: Reviewing Request with Student and OSD</i>	11
<i>Appendix II: Reviewing Request with Student, OSD and Instructor/Field Supervisor</i>	12
<i>Appendix III: Denial of Accommodation Request</i>	13
<i>Appendix IV: Skill Analysis</i>	14
<i>Appendix V: Template Case Review Committee</i>	16
<i>Appendix VI: Course Objectives</i>	18
What is a course objective?	18
How are course objectives developed?	18
<i>Appendix VII: Method of Assessment</i>	19
<i>References</i>	21

FORWARD

The intent of this handbook is to provide direction to the Offices for Students with Disabilities (OSD) in determining essential requirements and arranging reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities at the post-secondary level.

According to Ontario Human Rights Commission's (OHRC) *Policy and Guidelines on Disability and the Duty to Accommodate* (March 2001), education providers are required to take a proactive approach in addressing disability related issues, and in establishing policies and programs that are inclusive and accessible for persons with disabilities. Accommodations play an important role in creating an equal environment where respect for the dignity of persons with disabilities and respect for confidentiality are realized. The above mentioned policy highlights three key principles that are inherent in the duty to accommodate:

- 1) Respect for the dignity of persons with disabilities, including integrity, empowerment, confidentiality, privacy, comfort, autonomy, individuality and self-esteem;
- 2) Individualization, meaning that persons with disabilities are individuals first, and must be considered, assessed, and accommodated individually; and the
- 3) Right of persons with disabilities to integration and full participation, which requires inclusive design of facilities, programs, policies and procedures, and barrier-removal where barriers are found to exist. (OHRC, 2001, p.7)

With these principles in mind, this handbook will provide an overview of how the OSD's can facilitate accommodations by reviewing essential requirements of a course or program. The process described herein is meant only as a guide for OSD's to facilitate the determination of essential course requirements. The integrity of the process depends on the ability to identify and respect those components that are essential, with a willingness to negotiate and question any grey areas. This process would be implemented when there is a lack of clarity about whether a requirement can and should be accommodated, or not. Many requirements and factors being evaluated are difficult to define or quantify, and how, when and what to accommodate can be difficult to determine.

Section one introduces the principles and policies regarding essential requirements which disability service professionals are required to be familiar. Section two offers suggestions in applying the principles and policies. This section provides charts to guide the disability service professional through the process in determining essential requirements and arranging reasonable accommodations, as well as provide a resource list for further reference. The final sections are included as resources to help disability service professionals understand faculty terminology, assessing student outcomes that are typically used and specific methods of instruction.

SECTION 1: PRINCIPLES AND POLICIES

In order to define essential requirements it is important that the OSD first understand this term. “Essential requirements” is a specific term used in human rights legislation, referring to the bona fide requirements of a task or program that cannot be altered without compromising the fundamental nature of the task or program. Determining what is an essential requirement and what is not is critical in distinguishing requirements that cannot be accommodated from what can and should be altered.

1.0. What is an Essential Requirement?

According to the Ontario Human Rights Commission (2003) terms that have been used to describe essential requirements:

include indispensable, vital, and very important. Thus, a requirement should not lightly be considered to be essential, but should be carefully scrutinized. This includes course requirements and standards. For example, it may likely be an essential requirement that a student master core aspects of a course curriculum. It is much less likely that it will be an essential requirement to demonstrate the mastery in a particular format, unless mastery of that format (e.g., oral communication) is also a vital requirement of the program. [In contrast], non-essential duties would not detract from the main purpose of the [course or program] if they were not done or [done in a different manner]. (p.62)

“Essential” can therefore be defined by two factors: 1) the skill must be demonstrated to meet the objectives of the course; 2) the skill must be demonstrated in a prescribed manner.

1.1. Undue Hardship

Our definition of undue hardship is in relation to the Ontario Human Rights Commission (2003):

- Educators must provide accommodation, up to the point of undue hardship, to enable students to meet the essential requirements. (p.62)
- [It is therefore important for disability service professionals to understand that] “it is not discriminatory to refuse an [accommodation] because a person is incapable of fulfilling the essential requirements. . . . However, a person will only be considered incapable if the needs of the person cannot be accommodated without undue hardship.” (p.10)

In the *Policy and Guidelines on Disability and the Duty to Accommodate* (2001) the OHRC prescribes three factors when considering undue hardship:

1. Cost

Cost is quantifiable, [based on the operating budget of the institution, not the individual OSD]; Substantial such that it would alter the essential nature of the enterprise, or so significant that they would substantially affect its viability. (p.30)

2. Outside Sources of Funding

Make use of outside resources in order to meet the duty to accommodate and must first do so before claiming undue hardship. (p.33)

3. Health and Safety

[The institution] would need to demonstrate that the [health and safety] standard is reasonably necessary and that accommodation cannot be accomplished without incurring undue hardship. (p. 34)

The OHRC (2003) noted that:

There may be situations where a student [appears to pose] a health and safety risk to him or herself that would amount to an undue hardship, or an otherwise appropriate accommodation is impossible to implement in the particular circumstances. However, it is important that education providers not rush to such a conclusion. Further training for staff, or further supports for the student may resolve the issue. [The threshold for undue hardship is high] and therefore the accommodation process must be fully explored, to the point of undue hardship.] (p.70)

Where there is a dispute regarding a proposed accommodation, and [the university/faculty/field supervisor] alleges undue hardship, the onus is on the [university/faculty/field supervisor] to demonstrate it. It is not the responsibility of a student seeking accommodation to prove that a proposed accommodation *would not* cause undue hardship. (p.58-59)

1.2. Roles and Responsibilities

The core values of respect for dignity, individualization, integration, and full participation are at the heart of the accommodations process. Accordingly, in determining essential requirements and reasonable accommodations at the post-secondary level, it is critical that open and meaningful dialogue occur amongst the student requesting accommodations, the disability services professional, relevant faculty members, and field supervisors. “Meaningful dialogue can only occur when all parties understand their roles and responsibilities in the accommodation process, especially as the duty to accommodate is a shared responsibility.” (OHRC, 2003, p.66)

The Ontario Human Rights Commission (2003) stipulates the following roles and responsibilities in the accommodation process:

1.2.1. Student with A Disability

- Advise the accommodation provider of the disability (although the accommodation provider does not generally have the right to know what the disability is);
- Make his or her needs known to the best of his or her ability, preferably in writing, in order that the person responsible for accommodation may make the requested accommodation;
- Answer questions or provide information regarding relevant restrictions or limitations, including information from health care professionals, where appropriate, and as needed;
- Participate in discussions regarding possible accommodation solutions;
- Co-operate with any experts whose assistance is required to manage the accommodation process or when information is required that is unavailable to the person with a disability;
- Meet curriculum standards once accommodation is provided;
- Work with the accommodation provider on an ongoing basis to manage the accommodation process; and
- Discuss his or her disability only with persons who need to know. (p.70)

1.2.2. Post-Secondary Institution

Post-secondary institutions have an ethical and legal duty to accommodate. The OHRC (2003) outlined the legal responsibilities:

- The duty to accommodate rests on the educational institution as a whole - not just on the specific office for students with disabilities. [The institution plays the following role in the process]:
- Clear and reasonable processes and guidelines for seeking accommodation should be in place at all post-secondary institutions, and these should be clearly communicated to all students;
- The process of accommodation, as well as the outcome, should be respectful of the dignity of the persons affected, and should take into account the importance of integration and full participation. Any planning for accessibility should recognize that persons with disabilities are important stakeholders in the process;
- The post-secondary institution still has a responsibility, short of undue hardship, to cover the cost of the required accommodation, unless there is sufficient and non-discriminatory outside funding available. (p. 69)

1.2.3. Faculty and Staff

- Faculty and staff have a duty to educate themselves about disability-related issues, to interact with students in a non-discriminatory manner, to engage in the accommodation process, and to provide appropriate accommodation to the point of undue hardship;
- Staff and faculty responsible for designing or developing new or revised facilities, services, policies, processes, courses, or curricula have a responsibility to ensure that these are designed inclusively, with the needs of persons with disabilities in mind. (p. 69)

It may be useful for the OSD's to outline further the responsibility faculty have in determining essential criteria. An example of this can be found in Queens University Faculty Handbook:

Faculty Rights and Responsibilities

- Determine course content and general methods of teaching;
- Ensure that the standards in their course are not lowered or compromised;
- Ensure that a student has demonstrated mastery of the essential requirements of the course in order to obtain an appropriate grade;
- Fail any student if he/she does not demonstrate mastery of essential course requirements; and
- Determine, through consultation with knowledgeable professionals, the most appropriate ways to adapt the course to the needs of a particular student. (Available: <http://library.queensu.ca/inforef/srs/handbook1.htm#Rights%20and%20Responsibilities>)

1.2.4. Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD)

The role of the OSD is complicated in these matters. As employees of the institution the OSD act as a legal agent, ensuring the university meets the obligations as prescribed by the Code. At the same time, the OSD is an advocate for the student with a disability, ensuring that appropriate accommodations are provided.

The following responsibilities apply to the OSD:

- Function as a resource center for the University, its faculty and administrators, and students on disability issues;
- Identify, remove and prevent barriers for students;
- Take an active role in the accommodation process; and
- Assist students with self-advocacy.

Scott and Manglitz (2000) also noted that disability service professionals are required to:

- Support and encourage faculty in using a nondiscriminatory process when defining essential requirements;
- Be involved in generating a range of options for access. (p.34)

1.2.5. Outside Placement Agency (Field Practicum)

Pardo and Tomlinson (1999) in their useful study *on Implementing Accommodation in Field Practicum Settings* also identified an:

Interplay between the university and programs/scholarships offered at the university by outside bodies.... Both the university and the administering body have a responsibility to find reasonable accommodations for a student with a disability...Legal precedence has been set in the United States regarding the responsibility of the university for ensuring that the field placement agency is providing reasonable accommodations for the student with a disability. Canadian OSD's can draw from the cases found in American case law. (p.10, 23)

SECTION 2: PROCESS TO DETERMINE ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS

Determining essential requirements and reasonable accommodations may be a complex task, and often requires much thought and discussion. The following steps, and subsequent charts found in the appendices, provide tools to assist with the accommodation process. The flow charts serve as a guide to identifying key players, determining important questions in a logical fashion, and keeping within best practice standards. Depending on the unique circumstances of the case to be discussed, one might start at any point on the flow chart.

The charts also provide rationales for asking relevant questions in the process, and include different ways of posing questions. Again, the questions asked will depend on the unique circumstances of the case, and personal communication styles. It is intended that these questions serve as examples of helpful questions in order to stimulate discussion and collaboratively work towards determining essential requirements and reasonable accommodations.

The process may also vary according to institutional practices and beliefs. This being considered, the process outlined in this handbook is a general guideline that may be followed.

Step 1: Accommodation Request

The first flow chart (Appendix I) describes the interaction between the OSD and the student prior to meeting with the professor or field supervisor. This step will occur when the student initially presents the accommodation request to the OSD. Documentation may be requested to support the requested accommodation.

Step 2: Reviewing Accommodation Request with OSD and Student

Once the request from the student is substantiated, the OSD professional considers whether, based on prior experience and where possible, they feel the accommodation will jeopardize the stated objectives of the course. If it is determined that the accommodation will jeopardize the objectives of the course, further counselling will be necessary with the student to consider an alternate accommodation. If the accommodation does not affect the objectives of the course, the student may be accommodated. If the OSD professional is unsure or if the OSD professional, the professor, or field practicum supervisor disagree about whether a component is essential, then more information is required. The process for approaching the Instructor/Field supervisor is described in the second flow chart (Appendix II).

Step 3: Reviewing Accommodation Request with Student, OSD, Instructor and/or Field Supervisor

The second flow chart (Appendix II) describes the information gathering and negotiation process when determining whether a course/field component is essential and if not, how it can be accommodated. The discussion with the Instructor/field supervisor may include an educational component that addresses the philosophy of accommodation, the ethical duty to accommodate, and the identification of skills to be assessed. Together, the instructor/field supervisor and OSD will determine whether the component is essential. An inventory of questions (Appendix IV) may be drawn upon as a tool during the discussion.

If the component is found to be essential and therefore cannot be accommodated, it is suggested that the OSD document the discussion which lead to the decision, discuss the outcome with the student and counsel the student about their options (e.g. course substitution, take course without accommodations, appeals processes).

If the component is found to be non-essential and therefore can be accommodated, the method of accommodation will be negotiated among the instructor, field supervisor, student and OSD. If the student accepts the accommodation, confirmation should be made in writing and the accommodation proceeds. It is recommended that a process for on-going review of the accommodation be implemented. If the student rejects the accommodation, the OSD should assess whether the student is rejecting for disability related reasons. If the student feels that the accommodation is not appropriate for disability related reasons, and the documentation substantiates the students self report, the OSD renegotiates with the professor/field supervisor. If there are no reasons related to disability affecting the decision, the student can choose to accept or reject the offered accommodation (however, there is no obligation to renegotiate).

Step 4: Handling the Denial of Accommodation Request

There are likely to be situations where the OSD and the instructor/field supervisor do not agree about whether or not a component is essential. As well, a student may want to appeal the decision of the OSD and Instructor/field supervisor. When there is a disagreement it is recommended that a Review Committee meet to determine whether or not the component is essential. It is important to note that the OHRC (2003) has stated [that] dispute resolution procedures that are not timely or effective could amount to a failure of the duty to accommodate. (p.59)

It is recommended that a Review Committee include some or all of the following individuals. This model also recognizes institutional differences.

1. The Instructor
2. The Instructor's superior (e.g., Chair, Dean, etc.)
3. Outside Placement Agency (Field Supervisor)
4. A specialist adequately qualified to evaluate the student needs (OSD)
5. Other faculty in field may be required
6. Other relevant officials as per institutional requirements (e.g., Occupational Health and Safety, Human Rights Office, etc.)

The committee should be apprised of the ethical and legal duty to accommodate and undue hardship standards. The committee should also be informed that where the instructor has denied a request on the basis of academic freedom the OHRC (2003):

Has taken the position that academic freedom is unrelated to the duty to accommodate and should not be a defense to accommodating persons with disabilities. The purpose of academic freedom is to protect the special role of institutions of higher education in the free search of truth, and its free exposition...it will be rare for a disability-related accommodation to impinge on academic freedom. (p.61)

The Committee should also be aware that where a student's abilities are in question, they must be tested. [An] understanding of an individual's abilities and need for accommodation should always be grounded in a comprehensive evaluation. Research should serve as the foundation for clinical judgment and accommodation decision-making (Scott and Manglitz, 2000, p.34).

Documentation is a vital element in this process. A template (Appendix V) for documenting a Review Committee meeting has been provided. It important that the Review Committee document the meeting to include the following information:

1. The Date of the meeting
2. Time
3. Agenda
4. Who was present
5. Discussion: course objectives; identify if/how accommodation would compromise essential course component, note alternatives discussed and how alternatives discussed would/would not

work to meet accommodation request, etc.

There are two different routes to resolution depending on the decision of the Review Committee.

Decision A:

If the majority agrees that the component is essential and no acceptable accommodation exists, the committee must document the reason(s).

The Chair of the Review Committee should discuss outcome with student:

- I. Student subject to same learning and testing environment.
- II. Inform student of the process to conclude component is essential. Discuss options with the student (document conversation)
 - i. Continue course without accommodation(s)
 - ii. Withdraw from course. Where a disability is temporary in nature recommend completing course if/when the disability improves.

Decision B:

If the majority agrees that the component is non-essential and can be accommodated with alternative method the committee must discuss the options. The Chair of the Review Committee should discuss the approved accommodation(s) with the student.

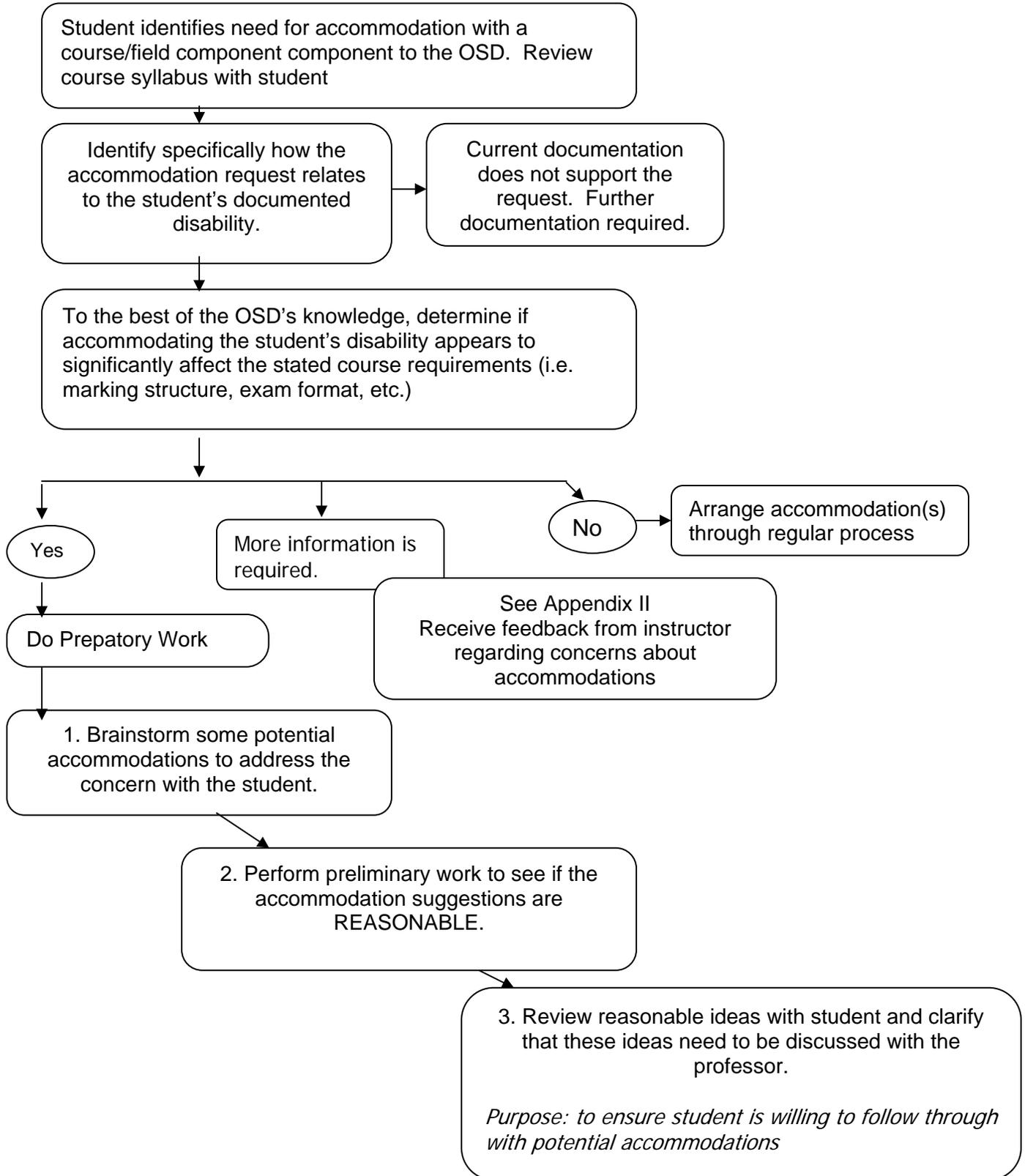
Where the OSD does not agree with the committee, the concerns should be noted in writing. However, it is recommended that the OSD recognize the expertise of the faculty and in the end the committee/faculty should make the final decision in determining an essential component.

CONCLUSION

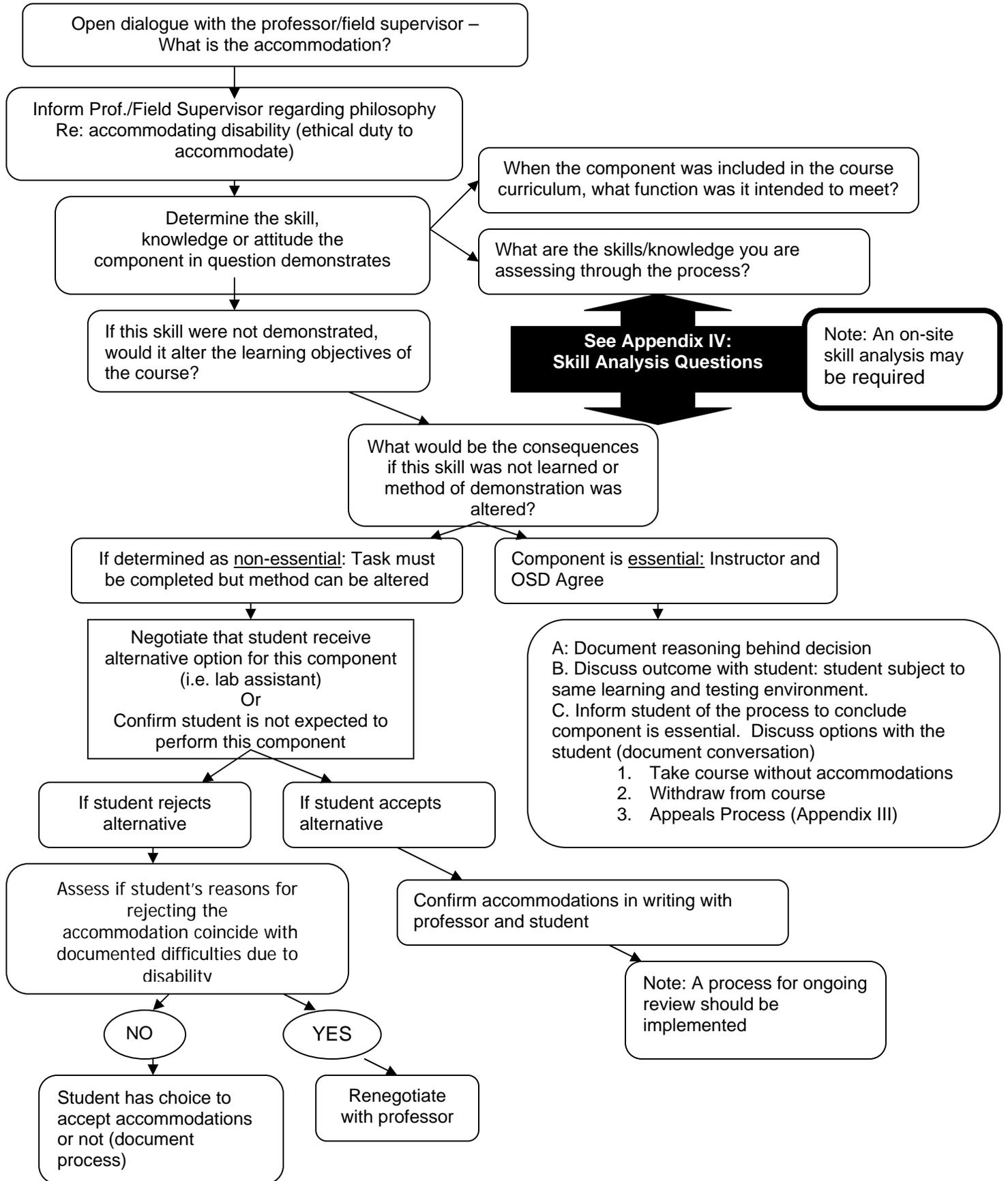
According to the Association on Higher Education and Disability (2002):

Reasonable accommodations are modifications or adjustments to a course, program, service, activity, or facility that provide a qualified individual with a disability an equal opportunity to obtain the same benefit, or to attain the same level of achievement or to enjoy equal benefits and privileges as those available to a similarly situated individual without a disability. Postsecondary institutions are obligated to make reasonable accommodations only to the known limitations of otherwise qualified individuals with disabilities. They are not obligated to provide accommodations that would fundamentally alter the essential components of a course of study...Providing accommodations and ensuring access are never done at the expense of the essential standards applied to all students.
[Brochure]

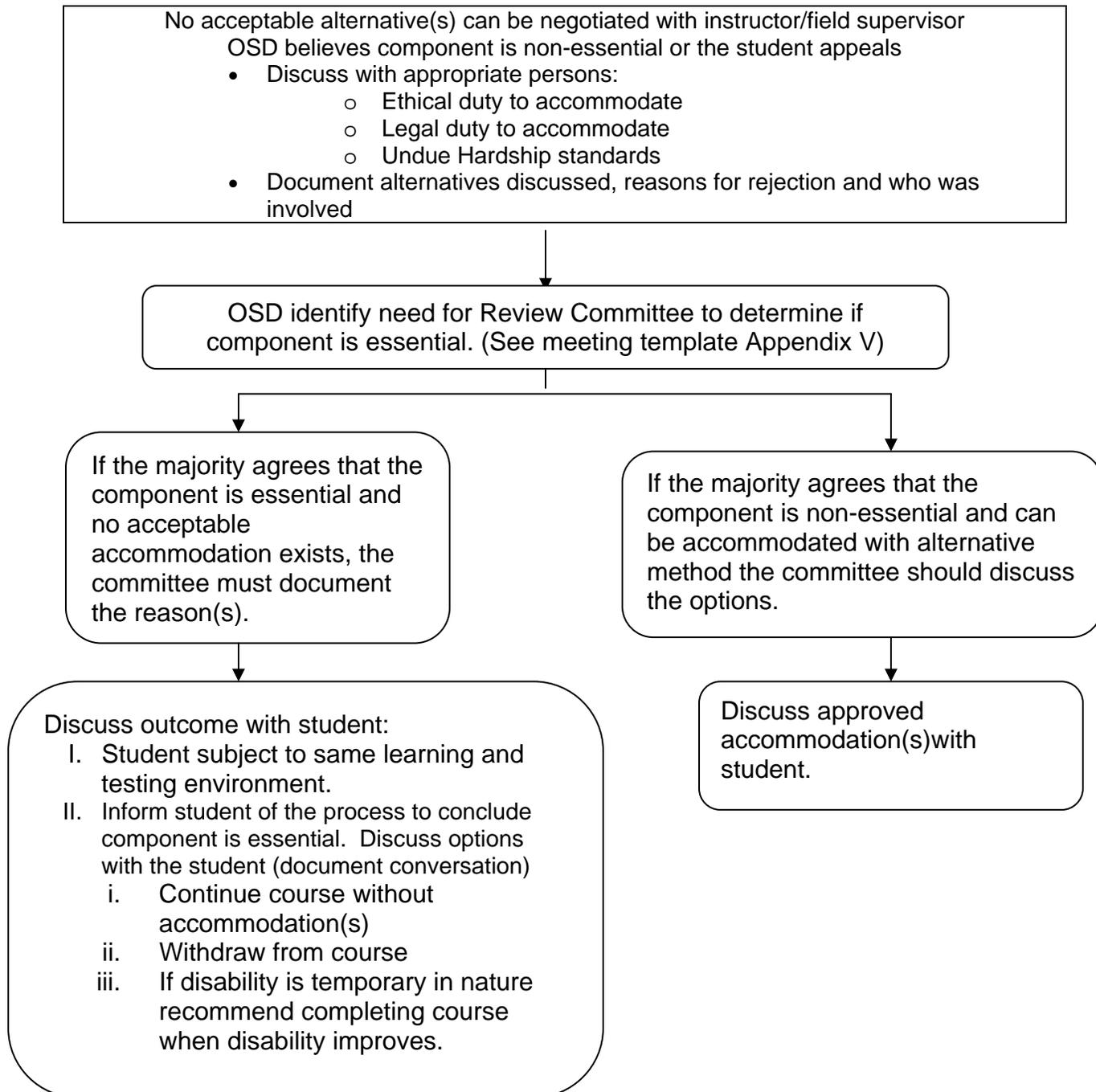
APPENDIX I: REVIEWING REQUEST WITH STUDENT AND OSD



APPENDIX II: REVIEWING REQUEST WITH STUDENT, OSD AND INSTRUCTOR/FIELD SUPERVISOR



APPENDIX III: DENIAL OF ACCOMMODATION REQUEST



APPENDIX IV: SKILL ANALYSIS

It is important that instructors identify the essential requirements (or components) in their course and/or program. If an instructor is very clear about what is being taught, and why it must be done a certain way, it is much easier to find creative solutions to the needs of students with disabilities. Where an instructor has not determined the objectives prior to the design of the course, the OSD may need to consult with the instructor in making informed decisions about determining appropriate accommodations without compromising the essential components.

With the goal of engaging in positive dialogue, the following skill analysis questions have been outlined for use by the OSD when speaking to the faculty or field supervisor. It is recommended by IDIA that open-ended questions be asked in order to allow for exploration of ideas, resources and concerns. Open-ended questions do not result in yes or no answers, but provide an opportunity to elaborate on reasoning and perspectives. This communication style has the potential to enhance understanding of each party's perspectives, and opens the door to working together towards solutions. It also promotes active listening and collaboration.

The following open-ended questions have been drawn from various documents relating to essential requirements. These questions are intended to facilitate communication with instructors. Phrasing variations have been provided to account for different communication styles, backgrounds and knowledge bases.

Learning Objectives

1. What is the purpose of this course? (Scott and Maniltz, 2000, p. 35).
2. Would elimination of the skills/knowledge/attitude alter the learning objectives of this course/program? (Blacklock, 2001).
3. Is the competency integral to the learning of this course? (Wales, 1997).
4. Are the skills/knowledge/attitudes an integral part of the learning objectives of the course? (Blacklock, 2001).
5. Does the ability or skill necessarily need to be performed in a prescribed manner? Why?
6. Was this course created to teach any of the skills/knowledge/attitudes? (Blacklock, 2001).
7. Would these accommodations require a fundamental alteration in the nature of the program, service, or activity? (Blacklock, 2001).
8. What is the purpose of the program?
9. What are the outcome variables that are absolutely required of all participants?
 - What academic skills can be demonstrated?
 - What percentage of subject area knowledge must be mastered?
 - What specific knowledge, principles or concepts must be mastered?
10. What methods of instruction are non-negotiable? Why?
11. What methods of assessing outcome variables are absolutely necessary? Why?

Alternate Method

12. Is there only one way for the skills/knowledge/attitudes to be demonstrated? (Blacklock, 2001).
13. Is there an alternative way to do the same work?
14. Academic Adjustment: Substituting Exam Methods
Is the exam methodology specifically designed to test the particular course material? (Hicks, Morley, 2000, p.27)

Undue Hardship/Consequences if Accommodated

15. Would there be any significant* consequences if this skill were performed at varying levels of competency?
*Significant
 - Does it put the student or others in danger?
 - Does it make a difference to the field acquisition of unique approaches or philosophies?
 - Does it make a big difference to the student's life or future? (Wales, 1997)
16. Would there be any significant consequences if the skills/knowledge/attitudes were not learned? (Blacklock, 2001).
17. Will accommodating the individual needs pose a risk to personal or public safety?

Skill Analysis

18. Will the student have to transfer the skill to different settings (i.e., Field placement)? (Wales, 1997).
19. Does the student have to be physically able to perform this skill [themselves]? (Wales, 1997)
20. Does the student need to be cognitively able to perform the skills/knowledge/attitudes themselves? (Blacklock, 2001)
21. What are the acceptable levels of performance on these measures? Why?
22. What pre-existing abilities or skills must all participating students possess?
23. Is there a minimal level of proficiency in these abilities?

APPENDIX V: TEMPLATE CASE REVIEW COMMITTEE

This template can be utilized by a Case Review Committee or modified for use by the OSD before an accommodation request goes to a committee.

Date:	Time:
-------	-------

Review Committee – In Attendance	
Name	Title, Department/Division, Workplace

Course Code:	Course Name:
Department/Division:	

Identify student’s perceived barriers and potential accommodative strategy. If available, attach written accommodation request.

--

Identify documented impact and/or restriction of student’s disability on task

--

<p>Further Documentation or consultation with expert in field required (i.e., Occupational Therapist) <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N Comments:</p>

Goals/Objectives of Course/Course Component

<p>(Note: If this has not been determined in advance of developing the course it is important that this be done before the committee goes any further. It is important to determine why the component is important to the course)</p>

Skill Analysis

Equipment Required:

Environment (e.g., fumes, odours, temperature, noise, group-work, etc.)

Onsite Analysis required <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N
--

Onsite Analysis Conducted <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N

Comments/observations:

Potential accommodative strategies	Will accommodative strategy compromise essential components? Y or N

Analysis/Determination		
This is an essential component for which there is no suitable accommodation.	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	Comments:

This is an essential component for which there is suitable accommodation.	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	Comments:
---	--	-----------

This is a non-essential component. Student will be accommodated.	<input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N	Comments:
--	--	-----------

Action Required (Identify accommodation accepted and recommended by Committee; who is responsible)

REVIEW COMMITTEE:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Follow up by Chair of Review Committee			
Date: _____			
Student accepted accommodations	<input type="checkbox"/> Y	<input type="checkbox"/> N	Comments:
Student did not accept proposed accommodations (student made aware of their options)	<input type="checkbox"/> Y	<input type="checkbox"/> N	Comments:

APPENDIX VI: COURSE OBJECTIVES

When the OSD discusses essential components of a course it is important to ask what the objective of the task is. There may be times where an instructor has not developed or used course objectives when designing the course. If the course objectives have not been determined in advance of developing the course it is important that this be done before the discussion goes any further. It is important to determine why the component is important to the course.

Again, the OSD will find it helpful to understand the language and what course objectives are when negotiating an accommodation.

What is a course objective?

Ory and Ryan (1993) outlined how instructors should determine course objectives and outline how to develop the objectives of a course or program. Ory and Ryan (1993) noted, “objectives indicate behaviours and skills that students should be able to do after preparing for class, listening to the lecture, and completing the homework.”(p.5)

How are course objectives developed?

Ory and Ryan (1993) also identified how instructors can develop the objectives of a course or program.

Instructional objectives can be written at different levels of learning. Several taxonomies or hierarchies of learning have been developed. . . [Bloom and a committee of colleagues developed one of the best known and most used]. The Taxonomy of Educational Objectives is a classification scheme for writing objectives that measure all possible learning outcomes that might be expected of a student. . . The taxonomy can be used to categorize instructional objectives into a hierarchy of six learning levels, starting with simple knowledge outcomes proceeding through the increasingly complex levels of comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. The hierarchy is progressive in that achievement of comprehension objectives relies on the successful completion of knowledge-level objectives; achievement at the application level is possible only after successful completion of knowledge and comprehension objectives, and so on. The following is a brief description of the expected cognitive behaviour at the six levels of the taxonomy.

Knowledge: The ability to know specific facts, common terms, basic concepts, and principles.

Comprehension: The ability to understand to interpret, to compare and contrast, to translate, to estimate, and to explain.

Application: The ability to apply previously learned facts and concepts to new situations, to solve problems, and to construct charts and figures.

Analysis: The ability to distinguish between facts and inferences, to recognize faulty assumptions in an argument, and to identify the organizational structure of something (art, music, and writing).

Synthesis: The ability to create something like a well-written essay or a beautiful piece of art, to propose an action plan to formulate a new scheme for classifying objects, and to integrate many ideas into one solution.

Evaluation: The ability to judge the quality of something based on its adequacy, value, logic, or use. (p.6)

APPENDIX VII: METHOD OF ASSESSMENT

As stated in Section 1.0., the OHRC (2003) has taken the position that:
 it may likely be an essential requirement that a student master core aspects of a course curriculum. It is much less likely that it will be an essential requirement to demonstrate the mastery in a particular format, unless mastery of that format (e.g., oral communication) is also a vital requirement of the program. (p.62)

With this in mind, it is important for the OSD to understand assessment. The following chart outlines various methods of testing. This chart has been developed to inform the OSD about the advantages and limitations of different testing methods. Developing an understanding about why some faculty chooses a specific method may indicate why the format is an essential component.

<i>Academic Activity:</i> TESTING	Advantages	Limitations
<i>Multiple-Choice</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • versatility in measuring all levels of cognitive ability, • highly reliable test scores, • scoring efficiency and accuracy, • objective measurement of student achievement or ability, • a wide sampling of content or objectives, • a reduced guessing factor compared with true-false items, and • different response alternatives that can provide diagnostic feedback. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are difficult and time consuming to construct, • Lead an instructor to favour simple recall of facts, • Place a high degree of dependence on the student's reading ability and instructor's writing ability, and • Are particularly subject to clueing. (Students can often deduce the correct response by elimination).
<i>True-False Test Items</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The widest sampling of content or objectives per unit of testing time, • Scoring efficiency and accuracy, • Versatility in measuring all levels of cognitive ability, • Highly reliable test scores, and • An objective measurement of student achievement or ability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate an extremely high guessing factor. • Can often lead an instructor to write ambiguous statements because of the difficulty of writing statements that are unequivocally true or false, • Do not discriminate between students of varying ability as well as other items types do, • Can often include more irrelevant clues than do other item types, and • Can often lead an instructor to favour testing of trivial knowledge.
<i>Matching Test Items</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require short periods of reading and response time, allowing [Instructor] to cover more content. • Provide objective measurement of student achievement or ability. • Provide highly reliable test scores. • Provide scoring efficiency and accuracy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have difficulty measuring learning objectives requiring more than simple recall of information. • Are difficult to construct due to the problem of selecting a common set of stimuli and responses.

<p><i>Completion Test Items (requires student to answer a question or to finish an incomplete statement by filling in a blank with the correct word or phrase)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can provide a wide sampling of content. • Can efficiently measure lower levels of cognitive ability. • Can minimize guessing compared with multiple-choice and true-false items. • Can usually provide an objective measure of student achievement or ability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are difficult to construct so that the desired response is clearly indicated. • Have difficulty measuring learning objectives requiring more than simple recall of information. • Can often include more irrelevant clues than other item types. • Are more time-consuming to score than multiple-choice and true-false items. • Are more difficulty to score because more than one answer may have to be considered correct.
<p><i>Essay Test Items</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are easier and less time-consuming to construct than are most other item types. • Provide a means for testing a student's ability to compose an answer and present it in a logical manner. • Can efficiently measure higher-order cognitive objectives (e.g., analysis, synthesis, and evaluation). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot measure a large amount of content or objectives. • Generally provide lower test and test scorer reliability than do objective tests. • Require an extensive amount of the instructor's time to read and grade. • Generally do not provide an objective measure of student achievement or ability (subject to bias on the part of the grader).
<p><i>Problem-Solving Test Items</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimize guessing by requiring the students to provide an original response rather than to select from several alternatives. • Are easier to construct than are multiple-choice or matching items. • Can most appropriately measure learning objectives that focus on the ability to apply skills or knowledge in the solution of problems. • Can measure an extensive amount of content or objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require an extensive amount of instructor time to read and grade. • May not provide an objective measure of student achievement or ability (subject to reliability on the part of the grader when partial credit is given).
<p>This chart is a compilation of the material found in Ory and Ryan (1993)</p>		

REFERENCES

Association on Higher Education and Disability (2002), College Students Who Have Chronic Diseases or Medical Conditions [Brochure].

Ashworth, Kaye. Information Sheet for Skills Analysis Form. (Presented at AHEAD, San Jose, California). Sinclair Community College, Dayton, Ohio (date unknown).

Blacklock, Barbara. (2001) Inclusion under the Umbrella: Addressing the Unique Issues of Law, Professional School, Medicine and other Health Science Programs. (Presented to AHEAD Preconference Workshop).

Hicks, Morley, Hamilton, Stewart, Storie. Universities, Student's and the Law: A Practical Guide for University Officials. (Presented in Toronto, April 3, 2000).

McMaster University, Centre for Leadership in Learning. (IDIA Panel Discussion). February 20, 2002.

Ontario Human Rights Commission. Guidelines on Accessible Education (September 2004), available online at www.ohrc.on.ca.

Ontario Human Rights Commission. Education and Disability: Human Rights Issues in Ontario's Education System (October 2002), available online at www.ohrc.on.ca.

Ontario Human Rights Commission. Policy and Guidelines on Disability and the Duty to Accommodate (March 2001), available online at www.ohrc.on.ca.

Ontario Human Rights Commission. The Opportunity to Succeed: Achieving Barrier-Free Education for Students with Disabilities. Consultation Report (October 2003), available online at www.ohrc.on.ca.

Ory, John C. and Ryan, Katherine E (1993). Tips for Improving Testing and Grading, (Volume 4) Newbury Park, California.

Pardo, Patricia and Debra Tomlinson (1999). Implementing Academic Accommodations in Field/Practicum Settings, The University of Calgary: Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

Queen's University. The Faculty Handbook, (November 2004), available online at <http://library.queensu.ca/inforef/srs/handbook1.htm#Rights%20and%20Responsibilities>.

Scott, Sally S. and Manglitz, M. (2000) Foreign Language Learning: A Process for Broadening Access for Students with Learning Disabilities. Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability 14 (1), 23-37.

Wales, Marguerite. What's Essential and What's Not – Help for Faculty in the Determination of Essential Program Competencies, 1997. (referenced questions created by Kay Ashworth and Lisa Badia).