A collaborative disability related accommodations process in work-integrated learning

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Students with disabilities are far less likely than their peers to participate in work-integrated learning (WIL). This gap may contribute to the high levels of unemployment for people with disabilities. Unemployment rates compound when accounting for intersectional identities, with disabled people of color experiencing even higher rates of unemployment. Skill development through opportunities such as WIL is critical to ensure equity-deserving groups can transition successfully from post-secondary institutions into the workforce. Without a transparent, collaborative accommodations process in an environment that is actively reducing stigma and ableism, it is likely students with disabilities will continue to be underrepresented in WIL and the workforce after graduation. This paper presents an overview of disability, barriers to participation, and relevant Canadian legislation. The authors then propose an outline for developing a collaborative accommodations process for WIL opportunities.

Keywords: Students with disabilities, accommodations, equity, disability

Work-integrated learning (WIL) is a form of experiential learning where a student is working within or alongside a workplace setting that is directly related to their area of study (Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning Canada, 2021). WIL has increasingly become an essential component of post-secondary education, providing students the opportunity to apply their academic knowledge to practical settings. WIL can be a transformative experience, allowing students to demonstrate their competencies, increase their self-confidence, and enhance their employability (Kramer & Usher, 2011; Smith et al., 2014). Jetha and Nasir (2022) recommend that educational institutions better prepare students for possible changes in the workforce. This includes adding training for soft skills such as problem solving, communication, teamwork, and critical thinking, which are known benefits of WIL (Smith et al., 2014). WIL experiences are critical to ensure equity-deserving groups gain enhanced employability and can transition from post-secondary institutions into the workforce (Ross et al., 2018). Equity-deserving groups refers to people who experience barriers to opportunities and resources due to discrimination such as: ableism, racism, homophobia, transphobia, etc. However, despite these benefits, students with disabilities are far less likely than their peers to participate in WIL (Gatto et al., 2021b). Additionally, the majority of disabled students engaged in WIL do not request accommodations, in part due to fear of stigma and discrimination, lack of awareness of accommodations, and difficulty disclosing their disability (Gatto et al., 2021b; McCloy & DeClou, 2013; Statistics Canada, 2018). This is a significant concern, as statistics show that people with disabilities experience higher rates of unemployment, particularly those with intersecting identities (Statistics Canada, 2020).

This paper reviews the concepts of disability and ableism and recommends a process to help ensure disabled students receive appropriate accommodations in WIL opportunities. Throughout this paper, the authors use both person first and identity first interchangeably, it is best to ask people about their preferences and use that language. The focus is on a Canadian case study, however, learnings may have broader application across other countries regardless of legislation. Accommodations are a means

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to ensure equitable access for people with disabilities through the form of adaptive equipment, technology, and other supports, which allows students to meet the same requirements as their peers, only with accommodations. Accommodations in WIL need to be approached differently than traditional classroom accommodations. They require a collaborative and interactive process between the student, the Disability Services Office (DSO), academic department, and the host organization. This approach can help to ensure that students with disabilities meet the essential requirements of their program while receiving appropriate individualized accommodations. As more students with disabilities enter post-secondary education, institutions and employers must be prepared to support and accommodate these students and new graduates.

DEFINING DISABILITY

Disability is a complex and evolving concept that categorizes people with lived experiences of mind-body differences as expressed in the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (United Nations, 2006; Welsh, 2020). It can be defined in various ways, including through medical diagnoses and functional limitations based on able-normative cultural expectations that might hinder one's full participation in society (Oliver & Barnes, 2012; United Nations, 2006). Disability is not a static experience; it can be temporary, permanent, episodic, apparent, or non-apparent and can vary in severity. Disability is contextual, meaning how disability is experienced is dependent on other intersecting identities, such as race, gender, and socio-economic status, as well as one's access to the social determinants of health like employment, healthcare, and housing (O'Brien et al., 2008; Wang et al., 2006). Additionally, having a diagnosed disability and access to a healthcare professional may mean the person has access to supports and resources (Welsh, 2020). For example, a physician's endorsement is often necessary to request disability accommodations in academic and employment settings (Welsh, 2020). However, some might opt not to disclose their disability due to stigma and potential discrimination, for example, being denied employment opportunities (Welsh, 2020).

The Medical Model of Disability versus the Social Model of Disability

The models of disability offer a conceptual framework through which one understands the conceptions and attitudes towards disability, people with disabilities, and ultimately how disability is experienced (Dirth & Branscombe, 2017). Although numerous models of disability have emerged, the dichotomy between the medical and social models of disability remains the most prominent in disability theory (Dirth & Branscombe, 2017; Holler et al., 2021). The medical model of disability conceptualizes disability through diagnoses, framing it as a deficit and an individual problem rather than a societal issue. Ultimately, disability management within the medical model focuses on finding a cure or behavioral changes (Iezzoni & Freedman, 2008). Additionally, the medical model deprioritizes and dismisses the expertise, knowledge, and lived experience of disabled people (Dirth & Branscombe, 2017; Iezzoni & Freedman, 2008; Pfeiffer, 2002; Withers, 2012).

The social model of disability, on the other hand, recognizes disability as a sociopolitical phenomenon (Holler et al., 2021). Disability and impairments are socially produced experiences founded on the idea that our environment and societal barriers are disabling (Oliver & Barnes, 2012). The social model "recognizes that physical space, public policies, attitudes, and generally accepted expectations of 'normal' can create [barriers] for people depending on their disabilities" (Acker-Verney, 2017, p. 5). The social model acknowledges that some impairments can be limiting, and that medical interventions are sometimes necessary (Barnes, 2012). At the same time, it empowers disabled people by prioritizing

their expertise and providing language that operationalizes "the real problems of disability," which include limited access to social determinants of health, stigma, etc. (Swain et al., 2003, p. 24).

Legal Definition

While many countries, including Australia, New Zealand, and the United States, are also party to the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, there can be differences in whether the convention's definition is embedded into local law and practice. The Accessible Canada Act (2019) incorporates the social model of disability in alignment with the convention, and defines disability as any impairment or functional limitation in interaction with a barrier that hinders a person's full participation in society. In contrast, the Ontario Human Rights Code 1990 defines disability based on the medical model, including physical, mental, developmental, and learning disabilities. Notably, if a person is perceived to have a disability, regardless of whether it is diagnosed, they are also protected by the code (Ontario Human Rights Code, 2001).

Disability and Intersectionality

Disability occurs across multiple identities, for example, race, gender, sexuality, immigration status, socio-economic experiences, etc. A person's experience of disability and barriers in accessing the social determinants of health are often informed by their social location and intersecting identities. The concept of intersectionality stems from Black feminist scholarship, which highlights how various forms of oppression and inequalities exist within a system of domination, reinforcing unequal power dynamics between individuals and social institutions such as employment and healthcare (Jackson-Best & Edwards, 2018). Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) defines intersectionality as an analytical framework for understanding how multiple social identities, such as race, gender, sexuality, class, and ability, intersect and interact to create unique experiences of oppression and privilege. This emphasizes the need to look at disability beyond a single-issue identity and beyond the assumption that disabled people are a monolith. Through an intersectional lens, we can begin to examine how disability is experienced and understood, and how systems have responded historically to determine responsive approaches to better address barriers.

In Canada, 6.2 million (22% of people aged 15 and older) identified as having one or more disabilities (Statistics Canada, 2018). Of that number, 14.3% identified as racialized, and 24% identified as women (Statistics Canada, 2018, 2020). Indigenous people experienced higher rates of disability than non-Indigenous people (Hahmann et al., 2019). It is important to note that more research is needed to better understand the intersectional experiences of people with disabilities in Canada. These numbers might not reflect an accurate count of the diversity within the disability community in Canada due to underreporting of disability due to stigma.

WIL opportunities and the accommodation process should consider these intersecting identities to ensure that accommodations are effective and equitable. For example, a Black disabled woman may face unique challenges in WIL related to anti-Black racism, ableism, and gender discrimination. Thus, accommodations should not only address the individual's disability but also consider the broader societal and systemic barriers they may face in accessing WIL.

Ableism

In order to design a collaborative accommodations process, it is imperative to explicitly name the underlying system of oppression at the root of the barriers and inequities disabled people face. Ableism refers to systemic discrimination and prejudice against people with disabilities (Oliver & Barnes, 2012; Welsh, 2020; Withers, 2012). This can manifest in various forms, including denied access to the social determinants of health, stereotypes, and negative attitudes toward people with disabilities. Furthermore, ableism can limit opportunities for disabled people and lead to exclusion (Law Commission of Ontario, 2012).

Ableism reinforces existing power structures that prioritize non-disabled people. It is essential to recognize that ableism intersects with other forms of oppression, including racism, sexism, and homophobia. People with disabilities who belong to marginalized communities may face compounded barriers due to the intersection of ableism with other forms of oppression. Addressing ableism in WIL requires a collaborative approach that involves creating accessible and inclusive policies, promoting disability awareness and education, and providing reasonable accommodations to ensure the full participation of individuals with disabilities.

LEGAL LANDSCAPE IN ONTARIO

As more students with disabilities enter post-secondary education (McCloy & DeClou, 2013; University of Toronto, 2021, 2022), institutions and employers need to be prepared to support and accommodate these students and new graduates. Universities and colleges in Ontario are held to the standards outlined in the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), and the Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities. The Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities added experiential learning as a performance metric for universities in 2020 (Government of Ontario, 2020). If post-secondary institutions are responsible for providing experiential learning opportunities, they need to ensure that students with disabilities have equitable access to WIL.

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) passed in 2005 to address attitudinal, information and communication, technology, system, and physical barriers for Ontarians with disabilities (Government of Ontario, 2022b). The Accessible Customer Service Standard in AODA states that persons with disabilities must be able to access services in a way that respects dignity and independence, while also allowing for integration, and equal opportunity. For example, if a student uses a wheelchair and the only accessible entrance is through the back of the building near the dumpsters, this does not allow the student to access the building with dignity. If the door or elevator needs to be unlocked by a staff member every time it is used, this does not allow for independence. The Postsecondary Education Standards Development Committee published recommendations to the provincial government for a proposed accessibility standard for publicly funded post-secondary institutions (Government of Ontario, 2022a). The long-term objective of these recommendations is to guide postsecondary institutions and the province to implement an ongoing intentional strategy. This seeks to actively identify, remove, and prevent barriers for students with disabilities from fully participating in, being included in, and benefitting from, all aspects of postsecondary education. If an institution meets all the AODA requirements, it still needs to ensure individual students are receiving accommodations in an environment free from discrimination and harassment under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Ontario Human Rights Commission

The Ontario Human Rights Commission was established in 1961 with the goal of preventing discrimination and advancing human rights in the province of Ontario (Ontario Human Rights Commission, n.d.). Disability is one of the protected grounds under the Ontario Human Rights Code. The Ontario Human Rights Commission oversees five different social areas; post-secondary education falls under the area of goods, services and facilities. The purpose is to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live, work, receive services, and contribute to society with dignity and free from discrimination (Ontario Human Rights Commission, n.d.).

In 2018, the Ontario Human Rights Commission released an update to the 2005 *Policy on Accessible Education for Students with Disabilities*. The policy states that post-secondary institutions have a duty to accommodate students with disabilities up to the point of undue hardship (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2018). To assess undue hardship, three aspects of the accommodation must be considered: cost, outside sources of funding, and health and safety (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2018). There is a high threshold when claiming undue hardship; the onus is on the institution to provide proof. When calculating cost, there must be proof that the cost would significantly impact the viability of the institution. If an accommodation is difficult to implement, or has not been implemented before, that does not constitute undue hardship.

Section three of the *Policy on Accessible Education for Students with Disabilities* reviews the scope of the policy and states that the duty to accommodate is applicable to all privately and publicly funded educational institutions (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2018). Although the Policy has extensive information on classroom accommodations, very little information pertains to WIL. The only reference in this policy is in section 3.1 stating that the scope of the policy "...depending on the context, may also include experiential learning placements (i.e., "co-ops", practicums, fieldwork)" (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2018, p. 16).

EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS AND BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

Employment Statistics

Employment rates in Canada for people with disabilities have remained consistently lower than rates of non-disabled people. In 2018, Statistics Canada found that people with disabilities are 59% less likely to be employed (Statistics Canada, 2018). The employment rate is significantly lower for those with autism, with only 33% reporting employment (Statistics Canada, 2020). In addition, those with multiple marginalized identities experience disproportionate employment barriers. For example, studies have found that women with disabilities, particularly those from Indigenous, Black, and racialized communities, face additional challenges in accessing employment due to the intersection of ableism, sexism, and racism (Itano-Boase et al., 2021). According to Till et al. (2015), potential to work describes people who are not employed but are looking for work in the next 12 months. Of note, 39% of disabled Canadians who were not employed or in school had the potential to work (Statistics Canada, 2018). As WIL experiences can lead to enhanced employability and easier transitions from school into the workplace (Kramer & Usher, 2011), this gap may contribute to the high levels of unemployment for people with disabilities. Skill development through opportunities such as WIL is critical to ensure equity-deserving groups can transition from post-secondary institutions into the workforce (Jetha et al., 2021).

Barriers to Participation

Stigma and attitudinal barriers

One of the most pervasive barriers people with disabilities encounter in the workforce is stigma and attitudinal barriers, where individuals with disabilities are viewed as less capable, reliable, or productive. This stigma can lead to discrimination and prejudice throughout the employee lifecycle, from recruitment to retention (Bonaccio et al., 2020). Stigma is a process that involves both structures and individuals, shaped by relationships of power (Jackson-Best & Edwards, 2018). It is a tool that creates hierarchies resulting in the dehumanization of people. This leads to barriers in accessing important resources such as healthcare, education, employment, and housing (Jackson-Best & Edwards, 2018). Gatto et al. (2021b) found that 50% of students with disabilities who decided not to participate in WIL agreed that their disability factored into this decision. The same study found that students with a mental health disability, about 50% of students with disabilities, are 3.3 times less likely to engage in WIL (Gatto et al., 2021b). Cocks and Thoresen (2013) surveyed graduates with disabilities and found they were twice as likely as their peers to report bullying or harassment that impacted their WIL courses.

Awareness and disclosure of accommodations in WIL

Jetha et al. (2019) found that the most common barrier to employment for disabled youth was disclosure of disability related accommodations. As per the Ontario Human Rights Commission (2018), a person with a disability does not have to disclose disability unless they are requesting accommodations. Although this allows flexibility and agency for individuals, it means disability needs to be disclosed in every setting where accommodations are needed. Lindsay et al. (2019) found that common concerns for youth thinking about disclosure included: stigma, employers not having enough knowledge of disability and accommodations, negative past experiences, and loss of autonomy. Itano-Boase et al. (2021) found that some disabled students that opted not to disclose their disability during the WIL process were due to fear of having limited placement opportunities. In addition, students with mental health disabilities were found to be less likely than their peers to want to disclose (Gatto et al., 2021b).

Although classroom accommodation supports are widely known, only 60% of Canadian post-secondary institutions have information on their website about disability related accommodations in the context of WIL (Gatto et al., 2021a). Gatto et al. (2021b) found that students who have an understanding of accommodations in WIL are more likely to participate. WIL could provide the opportunity for students to practice disclosure of disability and learn what accommodations may be helpful when they transition into the workforce.

Disability inclusion and inaccessible spaces

Access to WIL programs can be further impacted by inaccessible workplaces (including physical barriers), the lack of disability inclusion, and policies to support employees with disabilities (Employment Accessibility Resource Network, 2020; Itano-Boase et al., 2021). A lack of disability awareness and accommodation also poses significant barriers for individuals with disabilities, as external partners may not be aware of the accommodations required to ensure full participation in the workplace. Some organizations might not have formalized policies and processes for disability accommodations, which could lead to challenges in accessing supports (Itano-Boase et al., 2021). For example, an individual with a mental health condition may require flexible work hours or a quiet workspace, which the organization may not be aware of or equipped to provide. Gatto et al. (2021b) found that disabled students who enrolled in WIL were more likely to understand the accommodations they needed in the workplace. Addressing these barriers requires a multifaceted approach, including

raising awareness about disability, promoting accessible and inclusive organizations, and establishing equitable and inclusive policies that support individuals with disabilities and accommodation needs.

ACCOMMODATIONS PROCESS

The University of Toronto uses the term experiential learning to describe "the process of learning from experience or learning by doing" (University of Toronto, n.d. para. 1). Experiential learning can include things like community engaged learning, fieldwork, faculty or student led research, and international experiences. For the purpose of this example, we are referring to curricular WIL experiences such as academic internships, professional practicums, simulated work experience, and advanced labs. Co-curricular activities and co-ops may have different processes depending on the organization involved and relevant legislation. For example, if a student is in a paid co-op, they are also employees of the organization that may have its own accommodation policies and procedures.

One of the ways post-secondary staff, faculty, and external partners can best support students with disabilities in WIL is by having a transparent and collaborative accommodations process. The Ontario Human Rights Commission (2018) states that the process of determining appropriate accommodations is just as important as the accommodations provided. An educational provider can fail to meet their duty to accommodate by not outlining and documenting the steps taken to accommodate the student. Having a clear process ensures both that students are appropriately accommodated, and that the institution has fulfilled the duty to accommodate.

Over the last six years, the University of Toronto created several roles that have been a critical part of the WIL accommodations process. Initially, an Accommodations Specialist for Practicums, Placements, and Laboratories was created to work with Accessibility Advisors and departments to help determine appropriate accommodations for students in professional programs. In 2018, the University added On-Location Accessibility Advisors who are physically located within the professional faculties and undergraduate colleges. This allowed Accessibility Advisors to develop expertise within the programs and provide individualized support to students, faculty, and staff. A guide for faculty and staff was also created that included information about accommodations in professional faculties (University of Toronto, 2020).

Despite the enhanced services provided by the addition of these roles and resources, there is still room for improvement in the processes. Students are not always aware they can request accommodations in WIL settings or request them part way through their placements. Processes that were previously working were abandoned when staff turnover occurred without in-depth knowledge transfer. Upon meeting with various departments, we found that the outlined process was too general. A process that worked for practicum placements at the Faculty of Social Work did not work for rotations within the Faculty of Pharmacy. At an institution with approximately 40 professional programs, 200 graduate programs, and over 700 undergraduate programs (University of Toronto, 2019), creating individualized processes was not realistic with the workloads of the current staff. The Experiential Learning Accommodations Coordinator was hired in 2022 to coordinate the accommodations process in experiential and WIL and provide support for faculty and staff. This work is well underway with several professional faculties. Documents and processes are being created with departments for departments, with language and terminology relevant to the field of study. Responsibilities are being assigned to positions not people, allowing the responsibility of accommodations to be embedded into a role so it can be included in onboarding.

Interactive Process and Responsibilities

The interactive process is a term used by the American with Disabilities Act that refers to the collaborative conversation between employees and employers that is necessary to establish appropriate accommodations (Job Accommodation Network, n.d.). In Table 1, Accommodations process, there is an example of the interactive process applied in an academic context at the Faculty of Social Work. The full document created collaboratively by Accessibility Services and the Faculty of Social Work, can be found on the faculty's website (Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, 2022). As outlined in the Ontario Human Rights Commission Policy on Accessible Education for Students with Disabilities (2018), disability related accommodations are a shared responsibility. AODA and the Ontario Human Rights Commission outline the need for dignity, individualization, integration, and full participation as the necessary components of accommodation. It should not be assumed that students with similar impacts or diagnoses would need the same accommodations.

Everyone involved in the interactive process holds expertise that is valuable at different steps. First and foremost, the student holds expertise in their own disability and experience. Students are best positioned to communicate impacts of their disability, barriers they may experience, and accommodations that have worked in the past. Accessibility Advisors hold the medical documentation, resources, history, and expertise on accommodations in a post-secondary setting. This includes the ability to support departments in assessing and meeting their legal obligations when providing students with disability-related accommodations. The department holds expertise in the program, the course or placement site, and essential requirements.

Essential Requirements

Outlining and communicating essential requirements is the responsibility of the individual program. "Essential Requirements can be defined by two factors:

1. A skill that must be necessarily demonstrated in order to meet the objectives of a course;
2. A skill that must be demonstrated in a prescribed manner" (Oakley et al., 2012, p. 4).

Essential requirements must be necessary to complete the program and should not arbitrarily be used to exclude disabled students (McKee et al., 2020). An example of an exclusionary requirement for a professional health program is that the candidate must be able to hear a heartbeat. This excludes students that may be deaf/Deaf/hard of hearing. A more inclusive requirement is the candidate should be able to detect a heartbeat (McKee et al., 2020). This does not change the purpose, but allows space for the requirement to be met with accommodations, as an accommodation must not change or lower a bona fide or legitimate academic requirement (Ontario Human rights Commission, 2018).

Task analysis can be a helpful tool for determining essential requirements. Examples of questions for task analysis are:

- What requirement is being assessed?
- Is the requirement absolutely necessary for the course/program?
- Does the skill need to be performed in a specific way? If so, why? (i.e., are the other ways the skill can be demonstrated?
- Has this requirement been recommended in good faith? Is it excluding certain groups based on presumed abilities? (Oakley et al., 2012; University of Toronto, 2020).

If the program has not outlined the essential requirements for students, it may be difficult to engage in the rest of the process.

Example of Steps in the Process

TABLE 1: Accommodations process.

Steps	Student	Accessibility Advisor	Practicum Office	Field Instructors	Assistant Dean, Field Education
1. Register with Accessibility Services	**Responsible**				
2. Assess practicum accommodation needs	Consulted	**Responsible**	Consulted*		Consulted*
3. Write and send practicum letter	Informed	**Responsible**			
4. Receive and distribute practicum letter as needed	Consulted and Informed	Consulted	**Responsible**		
5. Apply and secure a practicum placement	**Responsible**	Consulted*	Consulted*		Consulted*
6. Communicate accommodation needs to field instructor	**Responsible****	Informed	**Responsible****	Informed	
7. Implement accommodations	Consulted, Informed, and Responsible	Informed	Informed	**Responsible**	
8. Monitor, evaluate, communicate, and remediate as necessary	**Responsible**	**Responsible**	**Responsible**	**Responsible**	**Responsible**

Note. *If there are complex accommodation requests. **Students may request support from Practicum Coordinator with communicating their accommodations. From *Practicum Accommodations Guide FIFSW* (p. 3), by Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, 2022, University of Toronto (https://socialwork.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Social-Work-Practicum-accomodations-guide-FIFSW.pdf). Copyright 2022 by University of Toronto. Reprinted with permission.

The first step is for the student to register with the DSO within their institution. This generally involves the student submitting a registration package and relevant medical documentation from a registered healthcare practitioner. Some students may not know about the service, they may not be aware that they are eligible for support, they did not need accommodations during other schooling, or they may be afraid to disclose disability. The department should ensure students are aware of the DSO's registration process through communications like course syllabi, handbooks and listservs. This can be helpful information to communicate to incoming students over the summer so there is time to get medical documentation and register before the semester begins. Most DSO's in Ontario have registration information on their website. Students are eligible to register with Accessibility Services if they have a disability and are experiencing a barrier to accessing their education.

While educational providers do not have a responsibility to accommodate when they are not aware of a disability, they do have a duty to inquire (Ontario Human rights Commission, 2018). In some cases, students may not be aware they have a disability. For example, if a student comes in late and misses days of their placement without notifying the appropriate people, the situation should be approached without assumptions and speaking only from observations. The Supervisor or Practicum Coordinator could say, "I've been pleased with your ability to connect to the patients, and your case notes are very detailed. I have noticed that you've been coming in late and missed a few days. I wanted to let you

know that there are resources on campus that can support you such as Accessibility Services, Academic Success, and Health and Wellness." The educational provider should not request or discuss any medical information from the student and should be able to appropriately refer students to the DSO. Registering with the DSO allows medical documentation to be stored confidentially on behalf of the student so information is shared only on a need-to-know basis.

The second step in the process is a discussion between the DSO and the student to understand how the student's disability may impact them in the context of a practicum. In cases where the suggested accommodations are more complex, a conversation may be needed with the DSO and the program to determine if the essential requirements can be met with the suggested accommodation. If there is hesitancy about granting an accommodation, Laird-Metke et al. (2015) recommend asking the following questions:

- "Would the proposed accommodation result in a failure to meet any of the essential requirements of the program?
- Would the accommodation legitimately jeopardize safety of others?
- Would the accommodation fundamentally alter the educational program?
- Would the proposed accommodation pose an undue hardship on the institution? (using institutional vs. programmatic budgets" (p. 33).

This process requires a certain amount of trust between students, the DSO, and the department. DSOs need to trust that departments are acting in good faith in stipulating the essential requirements of the program. Departments need to trust that the DSO has assessed the functional impacts of the student's disability based on self-report and medical documentation and recommends accommodations based on best practices.

The third step is for the Accessibility Advisor to write and send the accommodation letter to the appropriate point person within the faculty. In the Faculty of Social Work, this person was the Practicum Coordinator. If there are any questions or concerns regarding the accommodations, the Practicum Coordinator contacts the Accessibility Advisor. This may also require a conversation with the Assistant Dean, Field Education if more information about essential competencies is required. The Practicum Coordinator is responsible for the fourth step that involves receiving and overseeing the distribution of the letter of accommodation. The student may prefer to share the letter with their supervisor or request that the Practicum Coordinator share the letter on their behalf. Students should be included in this conversation, so they are fully aware of where information is shared.

Step five is when the student applies for and secures a practicum. Some students may have location-based accommodations so it is important that these be identified beforehand to avoid changing locations at the last minute. For example, if a student struggles with fatigue and needs to spend considerable time managing symptoms, a practicum location within 30 minutes from their home may be an appropriate accommodation. Once a practicum is secured, either the Practicum Coordinator or the student shares the letter of accommodation with the Field Instructor in step six.

In step seven, the supervisor meets with the student before the beginning of their placement to discuss accommodations and expectations. The person supervising the student during their WIL experience is responsible for implementing accommodations at the site. If there are questions or concerns regarding accommodations, the supervisor should contact the program as soon as possible. As stated in Table 1, step eight, all parties involved are responsible for moderating, evaluating, communicating, and remediating as necessary. If there is an issue with a student's accommodation plan, the interactive

process may need to be re-entered at the appropriate step. The program should work with the student and the DSO to discuss possible alternatives. It is important to understand that student needs may change at any time during the WIL opportunity. For example, students may develop new or worsening symptoms, or a new disability entirely, and students without disabilities may develop a temporary or permanent disability at any time. Education providers need to be adaptable and understanding of these requests and engage in the process in good faith.

Without the interactive process, it is easy to miss important components of accommodations. For example, a student in a health sciences program who has worse symptoms in the morning is given an accommodation to sometimes arrive late. The Placement Coordinator reports that students need to be there on time due to the possible impact on patient care. In this case, crucial patient information is shared during shift change. An interactive process means not an outright refusal, but rather a discussion of other possible solutions to remove the barrier impacting the student. In this case, the student could be provided with an accommodation where they may miss days due to disability related symptoms, and they can make up any missed clinical hours at the end of their placement.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a framework for teaching and designing learning experiences to be accessible by intentionally removing barriers at the design stage (CAST, 2018). This framework acknowledges that all students have varying needs and is the preferred approach for creating an inclusive education system (Ontario Human rights Commission, 2018). The UDL guidelines recommend providing multiple means of engagement, representation, action and expression (CAST, 2018). Examples of UDL in the classroom would be flexible deadlines on assignments and dropping the lowest score on a series of assignments or quizzes. This is not only helpful for students with disabilities, but students that have caretaking responsibilities, with long commutes, or that may experience an unexpected event that impacts their learning on a particular day. Within experiential and work integrated learning, educational providers can consider how students will access educational material, use technology, and communicate with partner sites (MacKay et al., 2022). For WIL, an example would be employers evaluating their interview process to be more inclusive by providing questions before the interview, providing breaks as needed, allowing time after questions for the candidate to think, and if applicable, providing a practical interview to assess individual skills (Kovac, 2018).

CASE EXAMPLE

This example is an amalgamation of cases, names have been changed to preserve confidentiality. Julia is a fourth year Engineering student that has generalized anxiety disorder with symptoms of fatigue, difficulty concentrating, and panic attacks. She is in a yearlong capstone course that involves completing a team project and working in a robotics lab. The course includes multiple written reports, a presentation, and creation of a final product. The team also has to work on-site with a community organization as a client, so the project mirrored a workplace experience. Julia's classroom accommodations included: extensions, peer notetaking, alternatives to oral participation, and breaks to leave the classroom as needed. Julia met with her Accessibility Advisor and expressed concern about meeting deadlines, missing important information during meetings, and working in a new robotics lab.

Julia, her Accessibility Advisor, and Capstone Supervisor met to review the expectations of the course. The supervisor explained that teamwork was an essential requirement of the program, which made any extensions difficult as the team has to work together. They explained that the final reflection paper

due at the end of the course is individual and can be extended as needed. The supervisor explained that not everyone in the group would need to present, but everyone would need to answer questions posed by their classmates at the end of the presentation. UDL elements were discussed to reduce the amount the student needed to disclose. The supervisor made changes recommending that everyone assign a note taker for each of their group and client meetings, and a ten-minute break was added in the middle of each two-hour lab. The supervisor allowed flexible deadlines for written work up to a total of seven days per team and implemented an extra Teaching Assistant hour every week for students who needed more support in the lab. Finally, the structure of the question period after each presentation was adjusted so there would be a few minutes after each question for the team to formulate a response together.

Although the UDL implemented covered many of the student's concerns, Julia still needed individualized support. The student was provided with an accommodation where she may leave the lab or meetings as needed to manage symptoms as long as the supervisor was notified. Prior to the semester, the student took a tour of the lab so it would not be a brand-new space. The Accessibility Advisor had a follow up meeting with the student to discuss other supports. The student planned to prioritize teamwork whenever possible and request extensions on individual work in other courses. The Accessibility Advisor referred the student to a Learning Strategist to support time management and help her plan her semester.

LIMITATIONS

There are limitations to this process, mainly, this has only be used in a few departments at one Ontario University. Undergoing a similar process can take time and resources that may not be available at all institutions. The hope is that this paper offers a framework as a starting point for similar WIL experiences to streamline the process. Another limitation is that there are no current mechanisms in place to evaluate the process. There will be annual check-ins with departments, and Accessibility Advisors can discuss any student concerns with the Experiential Learning Accommodations Coordinator. However, it would be helpful to develop a survey to accompany this process to assess the possible impact on students and identify remaining gaps.

CONCLUSION

Students with disabilities are not accessing WIL opportunities at the same rate as their peers. They may experience barriers including: inaccessible spaces, negative attitudes, stigma, lack of awareness of available accommodations, and discrimination. Addressing these barriers requires a multifaceted approach that considers the unique experiences and intersectionality of disabled students. A collaborative and transparent process allows students, DSO staff, and departments to use their expertise to ensure students can access appropriate accommodations. Post-secondary institutions can build WIL experiences that prepare students for the workplace by using the social model of disability and principles of UDL through an intersectional lens. Regardless of legal obligation, students with disabilities deserve equitable access to WIL throughout their education.

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