



### **Introduction**

The School of Physical and Occupational Therapy is committed to offer accessible learning environments, to work collaboratively with students and the [Office for Students with Disabilities \(OSD\)](#), and to remove 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 of Physical and Occupational Therapy 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 OSD](#) 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. 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?**

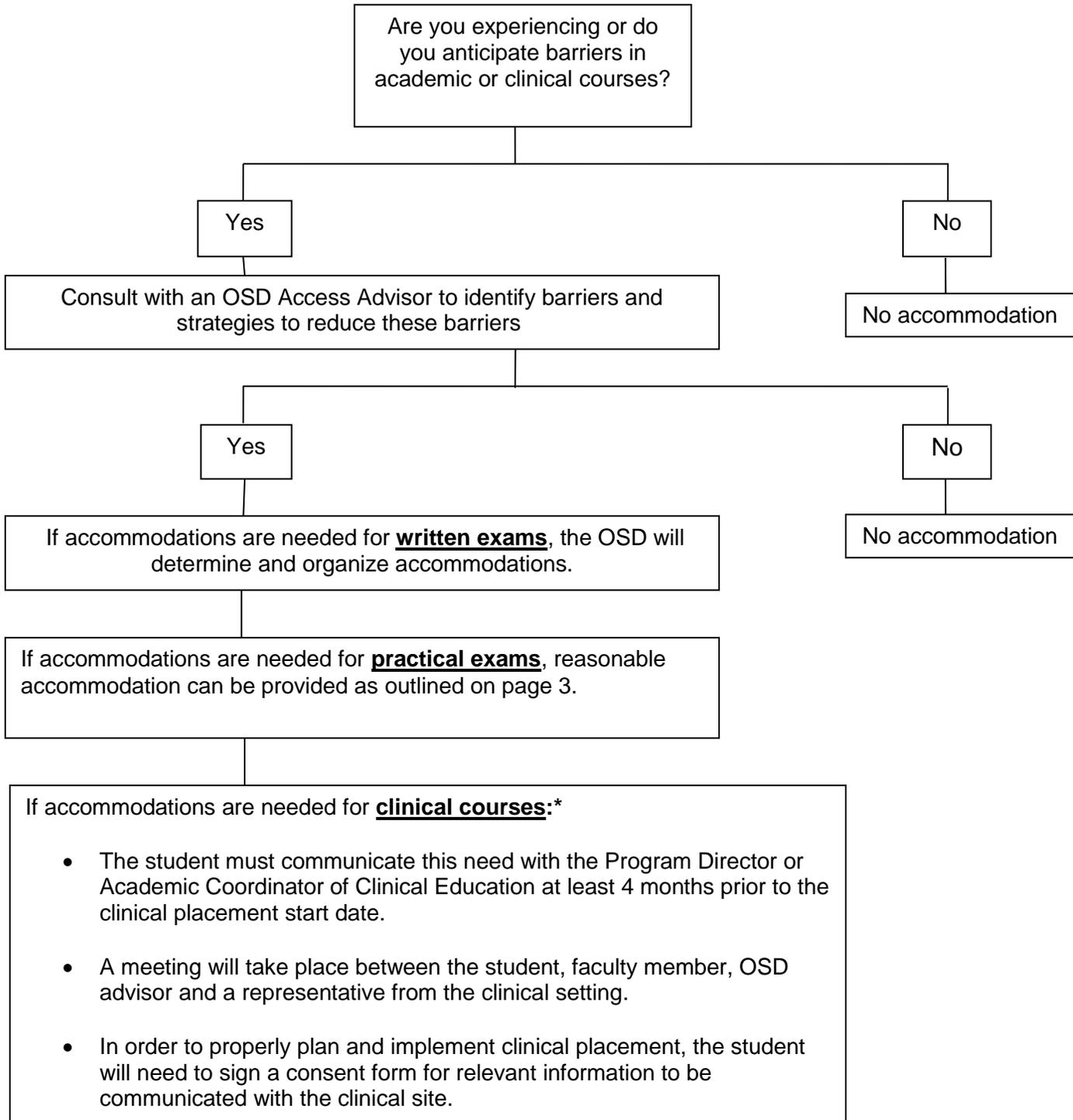
Registration with the OSD is confidential, however students may also benefit from discussing their disability with the appropriate faculty member at the School of Physical and Occupational Therapy (e.g. course instructor, Program Director, clinical coordinator). Accommodations for written exams are organized directly by the OSD. Students who wish to be accommodated during a clinical course or who require accommodations for a practical exam should consult with the OSD. The OSD will then facilitate a dialogue between all three parties (student, OSD, faculty) to determine how to best reduce barriers.

It is the student's responsibility to contact the OSD in a timely manner. Students are encouraged to identify and address any barriers at the beginning of the term for academic courses, and at least 4 months before the start date of a clinical placement. This advanced planning will help ensure that students are provided with appropriate accommodations to access their learning environments.

If a student does not contact the OSD 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



\* Prior to the start of a clinical course, the Academic Coordinator of Clinical Education will meet with the student to determine whether/how/when relevant information should be disclosed by the student to the clinical site. This meeting will also be required if a student is registered with OSD but does not request accommodations during a clinical course.

## **Accommodations for Practical Exams**

The OSD, 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 OSD and requiring accommodations for a given practical exam, the following modifications will be permitted:

- If the exam consists of 6 or more stations, a rest break is permitted after every 3-4 stations. The duration of the break and the rotation that includes the break will be determined by the exam organizers. If an exam consists of 5 stations or less, no break will be permitted.
- PT students may be given up to 50% more time to read the scenario and/or questions for each station if logistically feasible. For example, 3 minutes may be permitted if the standard reading/preparation time is 2 minutes. For OT OSCEs, universal design features have been incorporated so additional time will not be necessary or allowed. Note that extra time will not be permitted for the simulated patient encounter for both OT or PT students.
- 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 the exam organizers by the deadlines indicated below.

The student or OSD must notify the course coordinator of the need for practical exam accommodations within the **first two weeks of class**. If a student's registration with the OSD or request for accommodations occurs later than two weeks 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 considered.