

**From Accommodation to Accessibility**

**A Path Forward**

**A Review of the Glenn Roy Blundon Centre**

**Memorial University of Newfoundland**

**August, 2016**

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## **Executive Summary**

The Glenn Roy Blundon Centre has served students needing accommodations since 1992. The number and range of accessibility needs have increased and have become more complex. The Centre provides education sessions throughout Memorial, advocates for students and engages with external and internal stakeholders.

The Centre has had a mission statement since 2007. It is timely to reconsider the mission statement and its alignment with the University's Mission Statement and to develop a Vision and Values Statement. The Blundon Centre has an opportunity to explore and reconceptualize its mandate. In particular, the involvement of academic units in understanding and providing appropriate accommodations will be an essential first step in reformulating the vision of the Blundon Centre.

The addition of new staff (professional and administrative) and an education officer will enable the Blundon Centre to address current student requirements and to involve academic units. Technical and operational resources will also be required to support the work of the Blundon Centre and to enable students to access accommodations more efficiently.

Minor clarifications in the accommodations for students with disabilities policy, procedures along with improved web information will enhance access to and use of the policy and procedures.

## **Preamble**

The accessibility movement originated with the profession of architecture at a time when social norms demanded accessible buildings. Architects realized that it is easier to design barrier free buildings than to make buildings accessible after they have been constructed. Educators borrowed the accessibility concept by designing curriculum and evaluation that was barrier free and responsive to multiple learning needs. The text book industry led the way by designing and producing texts in audio format, electronic versions, larger print, visual representation and other accessible modes. Today's adaptive technologies, ever expanding, provide leading edge approaches and solutions for accessibility in learning and evaluation. Additionally, individuals, groups and organizations are promoting inclusive and accessible practices.

This report invites the Memorial community to imagine a path forward from the present focus on disabilities and accommodation to accessibility for all learners.

One of the most notable examples at Memorial of forward thinking is the School of Human Kinetics and Recreation (HKR). The core values of this academic unit are accessibility, flexibility and inclusivity. Faculty and staff do not ask what accommodations students need but rather "what do you need to be successful". In 2016, HKR received the Glenn Roy Blundon Award for fostering an

accessible learning environment for students with disabilities at Memorial University.

The student who nominated HKR for the Award wrote:

"Every professor (in HKR) was welcoming and helpful. Their attitude created a positive attitude for me throughout my degree and a desire to learn as much as possible without any barriers to stop me. Therefore, I am truly grateful for the experience I had while completing my degree. Wherever I end up in the future, it is a result of their willingness and understanding to teach. They gave me an environment where my disability was never an obstacle. I never felt excluded or at a disadvantage. It was an honour to be a part of the Human Kinetics and Recreation Society."

## **Background**

The Glenn Roy Blundon Centre was established at Memorial University in February 1992 and is dedicated to the memory of Glenn Roy Blundon, a former Memorial student and resident of Bay de Verde, Newfoundland. Glenn is remembered for his leadership and his commitment to equality and accessibility issues. His family continues to attend the annual Glenn Roy Blundon Awards Ceremony.

## **Terms of Reference**

The purpose of this review is to consider the following Terms of Reference and to provide recommendations within the scope of these Terms:

1. Mission of the Centre and alignment with the university's vision, mission and values;
2. Programming and service delivery;
3. Organizational structure;
4. Communication and reporting lines regarding accommodations, collaborative practices between relevant units and attention to timeliness in serving student needs;
5. Internal and external stakeholder relations;
6. Resource requirements, including human, financial, technical or other operational resources, and;
7. Policies and procedures.

## 1. Mission of the Blundon Centre and alignment with the university's vision, mission and values

The Board of Regents approved the [Vision, Mission and Values Statements of Memorial](#) in 2013.

### **Vision:**

Memorial University will be one of the most distinguished public universities in Canada and beyond, and will fulfill its special obligation to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

### **Mission:**

Memorial University is an inclusive community dedicated to innovation and excellence in teaching and learning, research, scholarship, creative activity, service and public engagement. Memorial welcomes and supports students and scholars from all over the world and contributes knowledge and expertise locally, nationally and internationally.

### **The Values of the University include**

- *“Responsibility to learners”* - Recognizing students as a first priority and providing the environment and support to ensure their academic and personal success
  
- *“Inclusiveness and diversity”* - Embracing and acting on responsibility to guarantee diversity and equity.

## Blundon Centre Mission Statement

“The mission of the Blundon Centre is to provide and co-ordinate programs and services that enable students with disabilities to maximize their educational potential and to increase awareness of inclusive values among all members of the university community. We assist students by facilitating access to information, services, and campus facilities in accordance with the university's [Policy on Accommodations for Students with Disabilities](#). The Centre carries out its mission in collaboration with faculty, staff, and students at Memorial University and off-campus agencies, including disability community organizations.

The Centre serves prospective and current students on the university's St. John's campus whose disabilities involve conditions affecting mobility, vision, hearing, learning (disabilities), chronic illnesses, or mental health. Support is also provided to students with documented temporary illnesses and injuries”.

The mission statement of the Blundon Centre was approved in 2007 and reflects the operations and day-to-day work of the Centre. It is timely to re-conceptualize the mission statement and to consider a vision and values statement which reflect those of the university



along with the special and unique work and responsibilities of the Blundon Centre.

The exercise should be a comprehensive one considering the philosophy of service and its meaning in a university community where the needs of learners are of the highest priority. Two of the values of the University [“Responsibility to learners” and “Inclusiveness and diversity”](#) are synergistic with the purpose of the Blundon Centre.

There is opportunity for the Blundon Centre and Memorial University to embrace a major change in direction from a narrowly defined service model of providing accommodations to a fully professionalized Centre that embraces a mandate to move Memorial University to a multi-dimensional accessible university. Directions at other Canadian universities and recent reports<sup>1</sup> at Memorial depart from a focus on disability and accommodation to a focus on accessibility. The Student Health and Wellness Report (2014) recommended “that the priority of the Blundon Centre be directed toward establishing strong relationships with the individual faculties and schools... [providing access to all students] in their curriculum.” (p. 11-12)

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<sup>1</sup> Student Health and Wellness Review Panel', Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2014; Philpott, D. and Chaulk, E. (2013), 'Accommodating Students with individual learning needs associated with disabilities and/or mental health issues. A shared conversation between the College of the North Atlantic and Memorial University of Newfoundland'; and, 'Report of the Blundon Centre Review Panel', Memorial University, 2007.

A first step in creating the Blundon Centre of the future would be to adopt the suggestion of the Student Health and Wellness Report that the Blundon Centre be renamed from “The Glenn Roy Blundon Centre for Students with Disabilities to The Glenn Roy Blundon Centre for Accessibility” (p. 11-12). Parallel to this would be the change of name of the [Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities \(St. John’s Campus and Marine Institute\)](#) to the Advisory Committee on Student Accessibility (St. John’s Campus and Marine Institute).

The new Blundon Centre would:

- a) be the undisputed location of providing service to students with complex and multiple accessibility needs;
- b) collaborate with academic units to initiate transition of accessibility from the Blundon Centre to the academic units where such arrangements can be achieved; and,
- c) provide leadership that would allow Memorial to realize and actualize its institutional responsibility for accessibility through educational outreach.

### **Recommendation 1:**

That the Glenn Roy Blundon Centre for Students with Disabilities be renamed the Glenn Roy Blundon Centre for Student Accessibility.

Rationale: To signal the change in direction from a focus on disability to one of accessibility.

**Recommendation 2:**

That the Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities (St. John's Campus and Marine Institute) be renamed The Advisory Committee for Student Accessibility (St. John's Campus and Marine Institute).

Rationale: To align with the re-naming of the Blundon Centre.

**Recommendation 3:**

That the Mission Statement of the Blundon Centre be re-conceptualized and revised, a vision statement and a values statement be developed.

Rationale: To consider the Mission, Vision and Values Statements of the Blundon Centre and their alignment with those of the University and to envision the Blundon Centre of the future.

## **2. Programming and Service Delivery**

The purpose of the Blundon Centre is to provide services to students requiring accommodation in all programs of study at Memorial.

From 1992 when the Centre started to Fall, 2015, the number of students requesting accommodations has increased from approximately 30 to 500 per year. The range of accommodations has changed considerably to requirements for physical disabilities, multiple mental health conditions, autism spectrum disorder, vision and hearing impairments and other conditions.

The large and growing numbers of students and the complexity of conditions requiring accommodation are the responsibility of the three staff members of the Blundon Centre. The staff is engaged in multiple services to students and the University community. (See Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) Self-Assessment Guide, Disability Resources and Services 2015)

In addition to arranging accommodations for students, the Blundon Centre staff advocates for students, works with internal and external stakeholders, promotes the use of adaptive technologies and universal design, seeks funding for technical supports (e.g., ClockWork database), and engages in a broad range of activities in support of students requiring accommodations. The manager liaises with faculties and schools, MUNSU, GSU, the Student

Wellness and Counselling Centre, Facilities Management, Campus Enforcement and Patrol, The Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities, external stakeholders and others.

The Blundon Centre of the future will continue to be the undisputed location for arranging accommodations for students at Memorial University. Complex and multiple ability/accessibility needs will remain the sole responsibility of the Blundon Centre, which will have the expertise and experience to assess, determine and implement accommodations improving accessibility for students.

As Memorial moves toward an accessible campus, the Blundon Centre will provide educational support to academic units as they become more involved in providing accommodations.

Human, technical and operational resources will be required to support students requiring a broad range of accommodations and to involve academic units in creating accessibility.

## **Staff**

There are (3) three categories of staff requirements.

a) The Blundon Centre requires professional staff with knowledge of and experience in the full spectrum of ability conditions and requirements. (See '*Student Health and Wellness Report*', 2014, p. 11-12). These

professional staff members (e.g. educational psychologists) will have knowledge in ability studies, experience and expertise in assessing and implementing accommodation needs and providing support to students. (Ratios for professional staff vary at universities and are dependent on the range of assessed needs.)

Reporting to the manager of the Blundon Centre, the professional staff members will have the following responsibilities:

- serving as support coordinators for students registered with the Blundon Centre
- reviewing test assessments, documentation and implementing appropriate accommodations
- re-testing where appropriate and re-assessing accommodations
- ensuring timely arrangement of accommodations
- ensuring faculty members and immediate academic administrators are apprised of accommodations required
- undertaking regular follow up with students, and if needed, with instructors.

Some of these services are being provided by a part-time psychologist and this arrangement should continue until professional staff members are appointed to the Blundon Centre.

#### **Recommendation 4:**

That up to four professional staff members (e.g. educational psychologists) be appointed to the Blundon Centre.

Rationale: To enable the Blundon Centre to support the full range of accommodations required by students.

- b) The Blundon Centre requires a staff person with experience in providing professional development, is knowledgeable in teaching and learning strategies, including technologies, and understands multiple learning needs. This will require that an education officer be appointed to the Blundon Centre.

Reporting to the director of Student Life, the education officer will collaborate with academic units at Memorial in promoting the goal of accessibility across the institution. (See 'Review of the Blundon Centre', 2007, Recommendation 2 and, 'Student Health and Wellness Report', 2014, p. 11-12.) This direction will give Memorial a platform to ensure "the focus of learning supports ... be closely aligned with the [academic] units to support their curriculum in their programs." ('Student Health and Wellness Report', p. 11-12).

Responsibilities will include:

- working with academic units to enhance their capacity of providing accommodations (e.g., space and extended time for final exams, and others as appropriate)

- collaborating with academic units to reduce barriers in the curriculum and to make student evaluation more accessible
- discussing with the Chairs in Teaching and Learning the potential for introducing Design for Learning (as envisioned by the [Teaching and Learning Framework](#), 2011), adaptive technologies, and other teaching and learning tools and strategies to advance curriculum accessibility.

**Recommendation 5:**

That an education officer be appointed to the Blundon Centre.

Rationale: To support academic units in becoming more involved in providing accessibility.

c) Administrative Staff – the addition of two administrative staff (in progress).

**Recommendation 6:**

That two additional administrative staff be appointed to the Blundon Centre .

Rationale: To provide administrative support in the Blundon Centre.



## **Technical**

There are (3) three technical requirements.

### **a) Improve efficiency by streamlining registration and notification**

Students reported that registering for accommodations and receiving notification of the arrangement is time consuming, inefficient and stressful.

The Blundon Centre is working with Information Technology Services on an electronic form (ClockWork) which, after evaluation, will be part of a larger pilot with the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science in the fall of 2016 with full implementation intended for winter/spring semesters of 2017. This will streamline accommodation registration with notification to students and instructors that the arrangement has been made.

### **Recommendation 7:**

That electronic forms for requesting and arranging accommodations be implemented upon completion of the ClockWork project.

Rationale: To eliminate multiple paper forms and increase efficiency of registration and notification of arrangement of accommodations.

**b) Provide information through CITL for on-campus students**

The Centre for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (CITL) uses Banner Student to provide information to students in Memorial Self Service for all courses delivered on-line by CITL. The information includes location and time of an exam and any accommodation that has been arranged for students. This information is not available for on-campus courses.

**Recommendation 8:**

That the Office of the Registrar and the Blundon Centre, with the assistance of CITL, provide the same information for on-campus courses in Student Banner for students requiring accommodations that they receive for on-line courses.

Rationale: To provide the same efficient and seamless process for on-site courses that is provided for on-line courses.

**c) Collaborate with Office of the Registrar to record accommodation information through Student Banner**

To reduce the inefficiency of registering accommodations every semester, the Registrar's Office and The Blundon Centre, where possible, should collaborate on recording student information regarding accommodations in Banner Student to be updated by the Blundon Centre as needed.

### **Recommendation 9:**

That accommodations be recorded and updated in Banner Student.

Rationale: To reduce for students, where possible, the requirement for registering accommodations every semester.

### **Operational**

There is one operational requirement:

#### **Space**

The Review of the Blundon Centre Report' (2007) recommended an increase in the space for the Blundon Centre (Recommendation #17) and the test area be fully soundproofed (Recommendation #18). The Centre occupies the same space as in 2007. Soundproofing was completed (UC-4007c) but was placed only on three interior walls, missing the fourth exterior wall where most sound transfer occurs. The CAS Self-Assessment Ratings Guide (Sections 11.1 and 11.3) identifies the unacceptable high levels of noise during testing.

### **Recommendation 10:**

That additional space be allocated to the Blundon Centre and the soundproofing in the testing area be completed.

Rationale: To complete the recommendations on space and soundproofing from the Review of the Blundon Centre Report, 2007.

### **3. Organizational Structure**

The Blundon Centre is one of six units that comprise Student Life, the others being Career Development and Experiential Learning, Student Support and Crisis Management, the Aboriginal Resource Office, International Student Advising and Answers. Managers of each of these units report to the director of Student Life. Student Life is part of the Office of the Deputy Provost (Students) and Associate Vice-President (Academic) Undergraduate Studies.

It is not within the scope of this review to consider the six units and their relationship to each other.

The recommendations on organizational structure are limited to the Blundon Centre within Student Life.

#### **Recommendation 11:**

That the professional staff (e.g., educational psychologists) report to the manager of the Blundon Centre.

Rationale: The work of the professional staff is directly related to the present core work of the Blundon Centre of providing accommodations to students.

#### **Recommendation 12:**

That the education officer of the Blundon Centre report to the director of Student Life.

Rationale: The work of the education officer is parallel to but distinct from the core work of the Blundon Centre of providing accommodations.

#### **4. Communication and Reporting Lines Regarding Accommodations, Collaborative Practices between Relevant Units (Attention to Timeliness in Serving Student Needs – addressed in #2)**

There are examples of collaborative practices between the Blundon Centre and internal and external stakeholders. (See Term of Reference #5, Internal and external stakeholder relations)

Some of these collaborations include:

- The Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities (St. John's Campus and Marine Institute)
- Hard of Hearing Association
- Learning Disabilities Association NL
- Coalition of Persons with Disabilities NL
- Newfoundland Co-ordinating Council on Deafness
- Administrative units at Memorial, for example, Facilities Management
- Office of the Registrar
- Student Life (other units)
- Faculty of Engineering, Medicine and Centre for Nursing Studies

[The Advisory Committee on Students with Disabilities, Memorial University \(St. John's Campus and Marine Institute\)](#) has broad outreach and opportunity for collaboration across Memorial and with external stakeholders. The Committee usually meets twice a year though this is not mandated in the Terms of Reference. The Committee comprises of twenty-five

representatives. It is timely to review the Terms of Reference and membership.

### **Recommendation 13**

That the terms of reference and membership of the Advisory Committee on Students with Disabilities, Memorial (St. John's Campus and Marine Institute) be reviewed.

Rationale: To ensure the terms of reference reflect the focus on accessibility and to review stakeholder representation.

The Advisory Committee does not have academic administrator representation. As the Blundon Centre becomes more actively involved, through the education officer, with academic units in advancing accessibility, the presence of an academic administrator at the decanal level, is essential.

### **Recommendation 14:**

That an academic administrator at the decanal level be a member of the Advisory Committee.

Rationale: To enhance the ability of the Blundon Centre to connect with academic units.

## **5. Internal and External Stakeholder Relations**

The process was consultative throughout the university community and with external stakeholders. There was a high degree of concurrence of responses on the services of Blundon Centre.

### **External Stakeholders**

External stakeholders reported a good relationship with the staff of the Blundon Centre, particularly with the manager who has always been available to address inquiries and respond to issues.

Individuals who spoke on behalf of four organizations, namely:

- The Learning Disabilities Association of NL
- Coalition of Persons with Disabilities
- Newfoundland Co-ordinating Council on Deafness
- The Hard of Hearing Association of NL,

Members of the Advisory Committee on Disabilities, MUN, raised the following:

- a) the Blundon Centre is under resourced
- b) there are no staff members with background in accessibility for persons with disabilities
- c) distribution of resources is sometimes inequitable across the continuum of accessibility issues for persons with different forms of disability
- d) there is no educational focus and outreach to the university community



- e) Memorial is not an inclusive community
- f) academic units are not as involved as they should be
- g) ASL interpretation is unavailable to students needing this support
- h) assistive technology is often unavailable and is usually not leading edge
- i) transitional support for students entering Memorial, especially in terms of learning assessments, is unsatisfactory and not timely
- j) facility planning is poor (e.g. all rooms of the new residences were not accessible and students with disabilities were segregated)
- k) students writing exams in the Blundon Centre are segregated and accommodation should be made where they take their courses
- l) there is no universal design approach at Memorial.

### Comments:

“The Blundon Centre has helped many students but I don't think they get what inclusion or the drive for disability rights is all about. This is a social justice movement yet I really feel that Blundon follows a charity model. It's like they're doing a favour for the student. The approach isn't holistic and the message the university community sends is that they don't value disability.... [Let the] Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities be the guide.” (Paul Walsh, Coalition of Persons with Disabilities)

“The Centre is sometimes an advocate for students, sometimes for instructors (based on anecdotal reporting). An issue for students with LD is they have to pay for assessments or updates of their assessments if they have LD (the largest group) but this is not the case for other students needing accommodation.” (David Banfield, Executive Director of the Learning Disabilities Association, NL)

Jack Jardine, Newfoundland, Co-ordinating Council on Deafness had unqualified praise for the staff of the Blundon Centre from its inception to the present. Despite the increasing numbers of students seeking accommodation through the Centre, staff “make sure students are accommodated in the various settings of the University, from classroom, to labs, to experiential learning situations outside of the standard classroom setting. The system has not been cluttered with a lot of administrivia and the student has been the focus of the accommodations. A second strength of the system to date has been the willingness of almost every faculty member to accommodate the students as they enter their classes.”

Mr. Jardine recommends that there be extra funding for the Blundon Centre in order to continue the high level of service.

Leon Mills, executive director, Canadian Hard of Hearing Association, NL, stated: “We have always had a very positive relationship with the Centre and its Director ... [They] have always tried their best to support students with disabilities.”

## **Internal Stakeholders**

### **Student Responses:**

Two students attended a group session open to all registered students of the Blundon Centre. Fifteen students requested individual meetings/interviews.

Students who are registered at the Blundon Centre are satisfied with the service for the most part. Every student interviewed stated that having the need for an accommodation is stressful and causes a level of anxiety. Students want a seamless process that minimizes anxiety and stress. Generally they want to register their need for accommodation and receive a timely resolution and confirmation that the accommodation has been arranged.

Students raised the following regarding the Blundon Centre:

- more training in mental health issues needed
- too many forms required
- staff do not have background in accessibility for persons with disabilities

- staff often very busy and unable to respond as quickly as needed
- need to feel the Blundon Centre is advocating
- resistance to accommodation because of cost
- space is not private
- Harlow space is inadequate
- space is not optimal for writing tests (noisy and cramped).

Some students have raised concerns which were specific to their situation. These are not documented here and have been relayed to the Blundon Centre and the director of Student Life for immediate response and attention.

### **Memorial University of Newfoundland Student Union (MUNSU):**

The student union is supportive of the work of the Blundon Centre and works closely with the manager in various capacities; for example, lobbying for policy change, eligibility for Dean's List, scholarships and student advocacy.

MUNSU provides space, if available, for testing, although MUNSU should not have to do this; the Blundon Centre should have sufficient space and staff.

## **Memorial Undergraduate Career Experience Program (MUCEP) Students:**

Students who work at the Blundon Centre appreciate the experience and knowledge they acquire and the increasing responsibility they are given. They feel more broadly educated about accommodation needs which they “will take to their workplace”. The Centre uses a peer led approach which is student centered. The Centre allows for intimacy and confidentiality.

Some issues addressed:

- too many forms;
- under resourced Centre, especially staff;
- students writing exams often do not have someone to accompany them to washrooms;
- students writing in the Blundon Centre are not always advised of changes in the exam or extensions of time because professors are in another building and may not think about the students writing in the Blundon Centre.

The MUCEP students fully support the move to electronic forms despite the challenges associated with the Winter 2016 semester e-forms.

## **Academic Units:**

The Blundon Centre and the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science work together on accommodations for students needing quiet space and extra time when writing final exams. The Centre advises the Faculty of

Engineering about the students needing accommodation, and the academic program administrator in Engineering ensures the accommodation is made and an invigilator is engaged. The room is arranged in close proximity to the course instructor who is invigilating the same exam.

The Faculty views the arrangement as "good for students and professors". Other examples of accommodation being provided for final exams occur in the Faculty of Medicine and the Centre for Nursing Studies. (Note: there may be other units providing this service for students not registered with the Blundon Centre.)

The Blundon Centre is supportive of these arrangements in academic units and staff suggests that over time there may be other accommodations for which academic units might accept responsibility, for example, scribing.

### **First Year Success Program:**

The staff work closely with the Blundon Centre and are able to advise on transition concerns and academic supports needed for new students. They suggest that the transition to first year be sustained throughout their university career for students needing support.

### **Facilities Management:**

The director of Facilities Management and the director of the Blundon Centre work closely together in the following ways:

- on a case-by-case basis for individual students

- through membership of the director of Facilities Management on the Advisory Committee of the Blundon Centre
- by Facilities Management receiving advice for renovations from the Advisory Committee which provides a priority list to Facilities Management.

### **Senior academic administrators:**

Senior academic leaders acknowledge there are issues to be addressed at Memorial in providing accommodation, and something “more than band aid” is needed.

Expressed concerns included: Blundon Centre is under resourced:

- absence of professional staff with background in disabilities and accommodations at the Blundon Centre
- a lack of leadership at senior levels to support accessibility education across Memorial

One senior academic administrator suggested there may be a role for Chairs in Teaching and Learning in providing leadership on curriculum accessibility in academic units.

### **Office of the Registrar:**

The Office of the Registrar and the Blundon Center work together in the following ways:

- to ensure that appropriate furniture is included in classroom renovations
- to schedule classes in rooms with appropriate technologies for specific accommodations

- to provide students, on the recommendation of the Blundon Centre, with early registration times
- to review and update the information included in the undergraduate “Calendar” each year pertaining to the Blundon Centre and students with disabilities
- to recommend and facilitate priority registration for students with disabilities on a case-by-case basis with supporting documentation
- to receive and provide information and advice on various matters pertaining to students with disabilities including regulations and proposed regulations in the University Calendar
- to link students with disabilities with academic advisors for academic advice pertaining to course selection and registration.

## **Centre for Innovation in Teaching and Learning**

Over the years, the Centre for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (CITL), in collaboration with the Blundon Centre, has provided support to students on the St. John’s Campus who require accommodations (for example, a quiet space, specialized software, wheelchair accessible, reader/scribe, extended time and others) when doing exams for online courses. While this likely began as a periodic request, it has grown significantly, to the point in the fall 2015 semester that there were nearly 150 separate accommodations coordinated by CITL. This entailed the arrangement of suitable spaces and rooms and appropriate equipment which included, at times, the use of staff offices; additionally, all invigilation fees are paid by CITL.



With the anticipated involvement of academic units in providing space and some other accommodations, the need for space at CITL should dissipate. The practice of requiring CITL to provide accommodations should not be expected or required. It is an anomalous historical arrangement.

CITL offers its expertise to the Blundon Centre in the following ways:

- supporting the Blundon Centre and the Registrar's Office in developing for on-campus courses the information system available for online courses for students requiring accommodations (See Programming and Serving Delivery, Section 2, Recommendation #8.)
- continuing the CITL mandate of installing and maintaining educational technologies when adaptive and assistive technologies are incorporated into classrooms.

## **Educational Partnerships**

The manager of the Blundon Centre has partnered with administrative units to provide education and outreach on issues of accommodations.

The manager has collaborated with the information services librarian and chair of the Sub-Committee on Library Service for Students with Disabilities. The manager presented the work of the Blundon Centre to the

Librarians Academic Council. Both the manager and the information services librarian have worked on assistive technologies available at libraries and alternate format requests made by students.

With the education and policy officer for the Office of the General Counsel, the manager has provided information sessions (up to fifty-five to date) to academic and non-academic units since January 2014 on the Accommodations Policy for Students with Disabilities.

### **Biology Lab Instructor:**

This lab instructor has worked with the Blundon Centre for twenty years and states:

“I feel that with the help from the center and [the manager], we (the Biology department) have been able to help hundreds of students to succeed in first year biology that may not have been as successful without the availability of the Centre...

Some accommodations are more challenging...[than others]. As an example, in the past we have modified our lab procedures for a number of visually impaired students. Sometimes we have had to modify our lab equipment for students in wheelchairs or students who require special seating. I think that through communication between this department and the Blundon Centre we have been able to avoid many problems and pitfalls that can

sometime arise when dealing with such a diverse student body”.

## **6. Resource Requirements, including Human, Financial, Technical or other Operational Resources**

See Term of Reference #2 (Programming and service delivery) for recommendations and rationale.

### **Human:**

- Appoint up to four professional staff (e.gg educational psychologists)
- Appoint an education officer
- Appoint two administrative staff)

### **Technical**

- Implement electronic forms (ClockWork) for student registration.
- Provide information in Banner Student for all on-site courses indicating
  - accommodations have been arranged (as provided by CITL for online courses).
- Record and update accommodations in Banner Student.

### **Operational**

- Allocate additional space to the Blundon Centre
- Complete the soundproofing of testing area in the Blundon Centre

## **7. Policies and Procedures**

Memorial University's [Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Policy](#) was approved in 2013 and will be reviewed in 2017. The policy ensures “an environment of understanding and respect for the dignity and worth of each student and also.. [supports] inclusive education based on the principles of equity, accessibility and collaboration”. The purpose of the policy is “To establish principles, guidelines and responsibilities respecting access to University services, facilities and housing for students with disabilities in accordance with the [Human Rights Act, 2010](#).”

The renewal of the accommodations policy in 2017 should occur in tandem with the renewal of the Mission, Vision and Values Statements of the Blundon Centre with a focus on accessibility.

### **Recommendation 15:**

That the renewal of the [Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Policy](#) in 2017 focus on accessibility.

Rationale: The University can affirm its focus on accessibility with renewal of the Accommodations Policy.

## Policy and Procedures Web Access

In addition to the [Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Policy](#), there are three documents on Procedures for Students seeking Accommodations.

- [Procedure for Arranging Student Accommodation](#)
- [Procedure for Documentation Regarding a Student's Accommodation Request](#)
- [Procedure When a Student Accommodation Request Cannot be Arranged](#)

The accommodations policy and procedures documentation on the web site are cumbersome and disconnected and require greater clarity and navigation tools for those seeking information on and access to the documentation.

### **Recommendation 16:**

That the Blundon Centre and the Policy Office of the university improve web information and access to the accommodations policy and procedures documents.

Rationale: To improve web access.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Glenn Roy Blundon Centre for Students with Disabilities be renamed the Glenn Roy Blundon Centre for Student Accessibility.
2. That the Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities (St. John's Campus and Marine Institute) be renamed The Advisory Committee for Student Accessibility (St. John's Campus and Marine Institute).
3. That the Mission Statement of the Blundon Centre be re-conceptualized and revised along with developing a Vision and a Values Statement.
4. That up to four professional staff members (e.g. educational psychologists) be appointed to the Blundon Centre.
5. That an education officer be appointed to the Blundon Centre.
6. That two additional administrative staff be appointed to the Blundon Centre.
7. That electronic forms for requesting and arranging accommodations be implemented upon completion of the ClockWork project.
8. That the Office of the Registrar and the Blundon Centre, with the assistance of CITL, provide the same

information for on-campus courses in Banner for students requiring accommodations that they receive for online courses.

9. That accommodations be recorded and updated in Banner Student.
10. That additional space be allocated to the Blundon Centre and soundproofing in the testing area be completed.
11. That the professional staff (eg, educational psychologists) report to the manager of the Blundon Centre.
12. That the education officer of the Blundon Centre report to the director of Student Life.
13. That the terms of reference and membership of the Advisory Committee on Students with Disabilities, Memorial (St. John's Campus and Marine Institute) be reviewed.
14. That an academic administrator at the decanal level be a member of the Advisory Committee.
15. That the renewal of The Accommodations Policy for Students with Disabilities in 2017 focus on accessibility.

16. That the Blundon Centre and the Policy Office of the University improve web information and access to the accommodations policy and procedures documents.