

Memory Aid Policy

General Memory Information

Memory, including the acquisition, storage, and retrieval of information, involves a complex set of cognitive processes and neurological structures. Some students registered with SAS have disability-related functional impairments that directly affect memory. At university, students must learn and retrieve significantly more information at a higher level of complexity and detail than they have in the past.

The general purpose of all academic accommodations is to increase the likelihood that the performance of students reflects their knowledge and ability, rather than the functional impact of their disability, without jeopardizing essential course requirements or providing an unfair advantage. **Memory Aids** are a rare accommodation for students whose disabilities clearly impact on the ability to retrieve information that they have learned during tests and exams. A memory aid will not be suggested for a student unless we have disability-related documentation that strongly supports the need.

A memory aid should not contain a synopsis of course material, but rather provide a cue to definition and formulae that would enable the student to solve the problem or generate a response. If information on the memory aid is deemed to be an essential learning objective or outcome of the course, it should not be allowed. For example, if the learning objective or outcome of the course is to know the formula, it should not be allowed on the memory aid; however, if the learning objective or outcome of the course is to demonstrate the ability to apply the formula, then it could be allowed.

Memory aids are reviewed and signed by the instructor if approved, since the instructor is the one who decides the learning objectives or essential requirements of the course. Instructors can choose to remove memory triggers that are deemed to be essential requirements for the course. It is understood that the nature of some courses does not lend itself to the use of memory aids.

Memory Aids: Cueing Sheets and Computational Formula Sheets

Cueing Sheets

Cueing Sheets are not cheat sheets with facts copied down for the student to refer to during tests or exams. They contain retrieval cues that the student has developed over time from their course material to assist in the recall of previously learned information.

Features of a Cueing Sheet

- Double-sided 8 ½" x 11" page.
- Created on a computer (minimum 12-point font) or handwritten (equivalent to 12-point font).
- May contain mind maps, images, rhymes, acronyms, and so on.
- Make sense only to the student who created it.

- Submitted to Accessibility Consultant and Instructor via email within 5 business days of a test or exam for review and possible revision.

Cueing Sheets do not:

- Cover all the information from the course.
- Include specific examples, complete terms or definitions, or other essential course knowledge.
- Provide answers.

Computational Formula Sheets

A Computational Formula Sheet is appropriate only for courses for which memorization of computational formulae is not an essential learning objective. It is intended to allow students to demonstrate their ability to apply formulas rather than to retrieve them from memory.

Features of a Computational Formula Sheet

- Double sided 8 ½" x 11" page.
- Created on a computer (minimum 12-point font) or handwritten (equivalent to 12-point font).
- Contain formulas in notation form.
- Submitted to Accessibility Consultant and Instructor via email within 5 business days of a test or exam for review and possible revision.

Computational Formula Sheets do not:

- Cover all possible formulas, only those that cannot be retrieved.
- Include instructions, steps, or specific examples.
- Provide essential information, for example, theoretical information about the relationships among concepts (such as in a purely definitional formula).
- Generally, do not include conversion.

Memory Aids: Process

Accessibility Consultant's Role:

1. The AC reviews the student's formal documentation to verify a functional limitation that supports the Memory Aid accommodation. In unclear cases, the AC may request additional or updated documentation. In all cases, the AC and student must first employ alternatives, including:
 - Referral to a Student Learning Coordinator to develop individualized exam-writing and memory strategies, with an emphasis on self-testing.
 - Referral to other campus resources to develop exam-writing and exam anxiety coping strategies.

In very rare cases where these have proven ineffective, and up-to-date documentation clearly indicates a functional impairment in the student's ability to retrieve information they have learned, SAS will support Memory Aid Accommodation.

2. After having approved the Memory Aid Accommodation, the Accessibility Consultant adds it to the student's Letter of Accommodation (LOA) and emails the LOA to the Instructor.
3. For each test or exam, the Accessibility Consultant oversees the Memory Aid Accommodation. This may include assisting the student in the development of the memory aid and/or screening of the proposed memory aid.

Student's Role:

1. The students must request accommodations at the beginning of each term. They must first confirm any authorized items allowed for the entire class for tests and exams.
2. The student must identify and summarize material throughout the course for possible use on the memory aid sheet. If the student requires support in developing cueing summary skills, they will contact their Accessibility Consultant.
3. The student must submit their proposed Memory Aid via email to the Accessibility Consultant and Instructor no later than 5 business days before the test or exam.
4. The student must make any changes required by the Accessibility Consultant and Instructor and resubmit the edited proposed Memory Aid no later than three business days before the test or exam.

Memory Aid Accommodation may not be available if the student does not follow the above process.

Instructor's Role:

1. After receiving the student's Letter of Accommodation, the Instructor will contact the Accessibility Consultant with any questions or concerns.
2. Upon receipt of a student's proposed Memory Aid, the Instructor will reply with their formal approval or request changes to the content if it undermines the essential learning objectives for the course or provides an unfair advantage.

When (and if) the instructor has approved the proposed Memory Aid, the instructor will send the approved document to sastesting@nipissingu.ca for inclusion in the test/exam package. The memory sheet is collected with the completed test/exam.