



I Need to Ask My Academic Institution for an Accommodation Because of Military Work

If you're a student-reservist at a school, college or university, here are six tips to follow when you need to ask for an accommodation because of a military course, training activity or deployment.

#1 – Be Specific in Your Ask

Different scenarios will entail different requirements, so it's important to know what you need and to be specific when making your request. Requests might include an excused absence for an extended period, a course-withdrawal, an extension on an assignment, an exam deferral, or some other kind of accommodation.

#2 – Contact Your Academic Institution's Accessibility Office about Accommodations

All academic institutions accommodate their students for a variety of personal circumstances. There may be a specific accommodation policy for student-reservists, because many schools and post-secondary institutions recognize the benefits of military service—including the skills-development, employment opportunities and experiential learning it can provide in support of personal, academic or career pursuits. In addition, many academic institutions have policies to support responders needed for domestic or international emergency operations. Contact your accessibility office to see what accommodations apply to you given your commitment to military service.

#3 – Start the Process as Soon as Possible

If there's a good chance you'll be on a course, exercise or deployment, submit your request as soon as possible. That way, you can follow the necessary procedures and notify professors as required. Sometimes, it's impossible to avoid short-notice scenarios (e.g., rapid deployment, last-minute slot on a course) but this shouldn't be the norm when requesting accommodations because of military commitments.

#4 – Be Prepared to Provide Supporting Documentation

You'll likely require some kind of documentation to substantiate your request. Typically, a letter from your chain-of-command will suffice (e.g., commanding officer, adjutant). [Letter samples are available here.](#)

#5 – Ask for Help if Your Request Is Denied

Educators usually try to accommodate reasonable requests and, most of the time, reservists are able to obtain the requested accommodation or leave. If your request is denied, help is available. Talk to your Unit Employer Support Representative or chain-of-command, and [fill out this form](#) to connect with Employer Support Programmes and the Canadian Forces Liaison Council. A student ombudsperson may also be able to offer support.

#6 – Take the Time to Thank Your Educator

Thank your educator appropriately when they support your accommodation request(s). This can be as easy as an e-mail or a conversation. The "thank you" can also be more formal, if you nominate your educator through the [Canadian Armed Forces Employer Support Recognition Program](#).

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