

MEMORY AID GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

PREAMBLE

Memory, including the acquisition, storage, and retrieval of information, involves a complex set of cognitive processes and neurological structures. Some students experience disability related functional impairments as a result of their documented medical or neurological condition or learning disability that results in a significant memory deficit. These students have documented impairments in rote memory, sequencing and/or long term memory which inhibits their ability to recall information even though they have carefully studied and understood the material. The purpose of academic accommodations is to increase the likelihood that the performance of students reflects their knowledge and ability, without jeopardizing essential course requirements or providing an unfair advantage. A memory aid provides these students with equal opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of course material. A memory aid is not suggested for a student unless Student Accessibility Services (SAS) has disability documentation that strongly supports the need.

When designed and used properly, a memory aid assists the student by serving as a trigger for recalling and accessing information during tests or exams. This allows for the assessment of the student's mastery of the course material as opposed to what they have memorized.

A memory aid should not diminish academic requirements or alter the standards by which academic performance is assessed. If the information on the memory aid sheet is an essential learning objective or outcome of the course, it would not be allowed. For example, if the learning objective or outcome of the course is to know a mathematical formula, it would not be allowed on the memory aid sheet. However, if the learning objective or outcome of the course is to demonstrate the ability to apply that formula, then it would be allowed.

PROCEDURES FOR MEMORY AIDS

SAS Counsellor or Advisor

- 1) The SAS counsellor or advisor reviews the student's disability documentation to determine whether it supports the use of a memory aid. If this is unclear, the SAS counsellor or advisor may ask the student to provide additional or updated documentation. If the counsellor or advisor determines that there is sufficient evidence to support the use of a memory aid as an accommodation, this is added to the student's accommodation plan and the relevant faculty member is advised.
- 2) The counsellor or advisor acts as a consultant to assist the professor and student to determine the suitability of this accommodation for a specific course. The counsellor or advisor may help to resolve specific challenges, provide sample memory aids as examples and clarify the process involved in using an approved memory aid during an exam.

Student

- 1) Students must understand what the purpose of a memory aid is and understand what is not permitted.
- 2) The student will create their own draft memory aid (letter-sized 8.5" x 11" – typically 1 or 2 pages in length) and submit it to the professor at least 7 days before the test or exam.
- 3) The student is responsible for making any changes required by the professor and re-submitting the final copy to the professor at least 3 working days before the test or exam.

If the memory aid is not received by the professor for approval within the appropriate timeline, it is possible that the student will not be allowed to use the memory aid.

Instructor

- 1) After receiving the student's Letter of Accommodation, the Instructor should contact the student's SAS counsellor or advisor if there are any questions or concerns.
- 2) When presented with the memory aid by the student, the professor will either:
 - a. Approve the memory aid sheet as is; or
 - b. Return the aid to the student to edit or remove any parts that have been deemed inappropriate. The student will resubmit the aid for approval.
- 3) Once an appropriate memory aid has been received, the professor will approve the memory aid and send the electronic copy to the Test Centre to be included in the student's test or exam package. All memory aids will be returned to the instructor in the student's test or exam envelope.

In protecting and preserving academic integrity, instructors are within their right to disallow a memory aid should it represent a clear academic advantage for the student. A memory aid can also be disallowed in testing situations where it is clearly stated that rote memory is being assessed (e.g., evaluating students' recall of certain isolated terms or facts).

WHAT IS A MEMORY AID?

A memory aid:

- Should be a minimum 12-point font; either created on a computer or hand written (equivalent to 12-point font).
- May contain mind maps, acronyms, rhymes, pictures, acrostics, visual chains, mnemonics or other symbols representing knowledge that assists the student in remembering and accessing information.
- Make sense only to the student who created it and would not be useful as an answer sheet to other students in the course.

EXAMPLES OF MEMORY AIDS

From Carleton University

- [Cueing Sheet Example 1](#)
- [Cueing Sheet Example 2](#)

not leaving cert... one or

?.....david bender,...

Kath rick,...  ...,therefore,.....,Francine



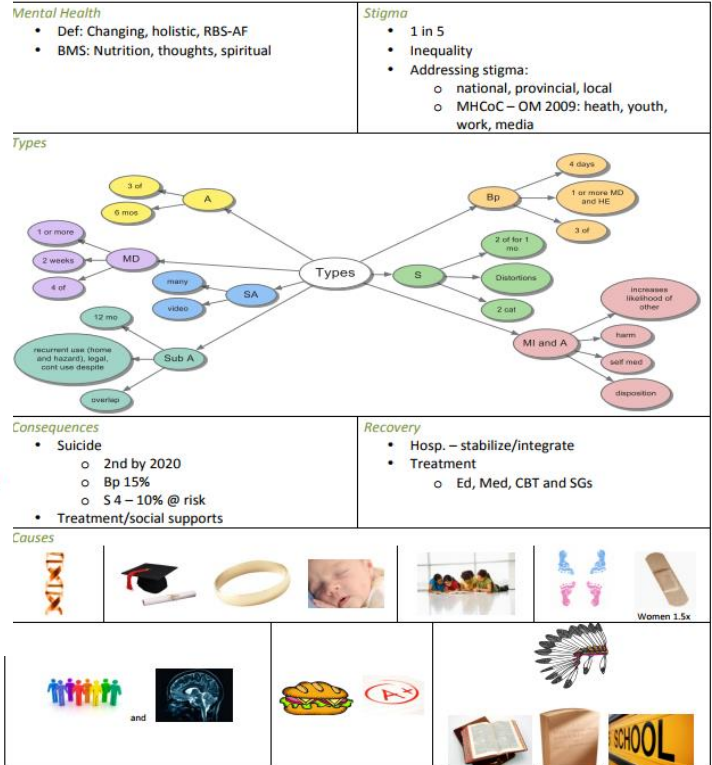
o mara,...  an rola,... brian or craig.

 nathan,...niamh today, tomoro,...

Memory Aid Example

While this example does not include all elements of a memory aid, it gives you an idea of what a memory aid can look like.

Student Accessibility Services, McMaster University
Issues in Human Services
Adult Mental Health Issues



What a Memory Aid is NOT

- A substitute for studying
- An exemption from mastering course material
- Full course notes, facts or concepts
- A study or answer sheet. It should only make sense to the person who created it
- Specific examples of how formulas are used
- Complete terms and definitions