WELCOME TO
SKILLS DEVELOPMENT ACCESSIBILITY SUPPORTS
INFO SESSION

2025 Update

SDAS

INFO SESSION

2025

- Please feel free to ask questions whenever they arise.

- This Info Session presentation will be available on TEAM Work's website.

- Resources discussed in this presentation are also available on TEAM Work's website.

- Please feel free to contact me (SD Coordinator) at any time for questions, thoughts and concerns.

OUTLINE

- **Introduction to SD & SDAS**

- **SDAS Roles and Responsibilities**

- **Eligibility**

- **Applying for SDAS**

- **Accessibility Supports**

- **Overview of Equipment and Services**

- **Q & A**

INTRODUCTION TO SKILLS DEVELOPMENT & SKILLS DEVELOPMENT ACCESSIBILITY SUPPORTS

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT (SD) PROGRAM

- **Overview**
  - The SD program targets unemployed, Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA) eligible Nova Scotians who need to learn basic or advanced skills to secure employment in NS.
  - LMDA - a yearly Government of Canada investment that helps Canadians get the training they need to find good jobs.
  - SD is contribution funding program that provides customized levels of non-repayable funding to individuals based on their income.
  - Individuals on EI may be eligible to continue EI during training as a living allowance. Those not on EI may be eligible for a similar living allowance.
- **Target Participants**
  - Unemployed individuals lacking marketable skills for improved employment prospects.
  - Canadian citizen or permanent resident. Resident of Nova Scotia.
  - LMDA eligible (Open/previous EI claim or accumulate work hours/earnings).
  - Job-ready but unable to find employment with current skills.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT (SD) PROGRAM CONT'D

- **Program details**
  - Full-time study/training required.
  - An industry recognized program is required.
  - Training must be provided by a registered institution that leads to a certificate or diploma. No university degrees.
- **Benefits**
  - Enhances employability and job prospects for unemployed individuals.
  - Supports participants in finding sustainable employment.
- **More Information on Skills Development (SD)**
  - Please refer to Skills Development Program Guidelines (Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration, ENS) for more details.
  - https://novascotia.ca/employmentnovascotia/programs/skills-development.asp

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT ACCESSIBILITY SUPPORTS (SDAS) PROGRAM

- **Overview**
  - To be eligible for SDAS, clients must be enrolled in the Skills Development (SD) program and have a permanent disability.
  - SDAS financial assistance supports the costs of equipment and/or services to reduce educational barriers directly related to the disability and training program.
- **Target Participants**
  - Lives with a permanent disability.
  - Enrolled in Skills Development.
- **Program Details**
  - Full-time may not be required (Accommodated Reductions).
  - An industry recognized program is required.
  - Training must be provided by a registered institution that leads to a certificate or diploma.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT ACCESSIBILITY SUPPORTS (SDAS) PROGRAM CONT'D

- **Benefits**
  - Enhances successful participation of training for people with disabilities.
  - Enhances employability and job prospects for people with disabilities.
  - Greatly supports people with disabilities in finding sustainable employment.
- **More Information on Skills Development Accessibility Supports (SDAS)**
  - Contact the SDAS Coordinator at TEAM Work Cooperative.
  - Access latest SDAS Go-To Guide on TEAM Work website.
  - Contact a Student Accessibility Specialist (SAS) at an educational/training institution (ie, NSCC).
  - Contact Employment Nova Scotia.

QUICK OVERVIEW

SDAS is a financial assistance program aimed at supporting students with permanent disabilities who are approved for the Skills Development (SD) Program.

Purpose: SDAS supports the cost of necessary equipment and/or services that can help overcome educational barriers directly tied to a student's disability and the training program.

Process: Students will submit an application package with help from their Case Manager, a Student Accessibility Specialist (SAS) from their educational institution, TEAM Work's SDAS Coordinator and Employment Nova Scotia.

SDAS ROLES OVERVIEW

1: CASE MANAGERS

Support clients through the application process and provide support through the CM Process

- Support clients through the SDAS application process.

- Assist in the early identification of disabilities.
  - Encourage and support clients to pursue documentation by a qualified professionals to confirm suspected disability.
  - Contact SDAS Coordinator to help in the early identification process.

- Help coordinate external assessments alongside SDAS Coordinator (if required).

- Provide ongoing support through the Case Manager process.

1: CASE MANAGERS (CON'T)

- Make referrals to, or receive referrals from, Student Accessibility Specialists (SAS) at training institutions, mainly NSCC.

- Sign privacy release on behalf of students/clients to speak directly with SAS at training institutions.

- Receive accessibility recommendations and academic accommodation plans from SAS at training institutions.

- Submit the SDAS appllication through LAMPSs or email.

- Notify the client when ENS makes a decision on an SDAS application.

2: STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY SPECIALISTS (SAS)

- Accept referrals from students who disclose their disabilities to the learning institution.
- Collect information related to the disability and recommended support based on the selected program.
- Provide space for students to make requests for accommodations through the learning institution.
- Develop an accommodation plan in collaboration with the student and teaching faculty.
- Reach out to SDAS Coordinator with questions and concerns.
- **NSCC requires privacy releases** for CMs to speak with SAS regarding students.

3: PROGRAM OFFICERS (ENS)

ENS' role in SDAS is specific to assessing applications and providing funding.

• Receive and assess SD and SDAS application packages.

• Notify clients and Case Managers when a decision has been rendered for SD and SDAS.

• Administer SD and SDAS funding.

• It is not ENS' role to identify or recommend accommodations under SDAS.

4: SKILLS DEVELOPMENT ACCESSIBILITY COORDINATOR

- Help CMs with the SDAS application and answer questions.
- Assist CMs and clients with early identification of disability and support.
- Connect CMs and clients to other regional, government and community based disability supports and resources, as needed.
- Help SAS with disability supports and answer questions.
- Act as liaison between ENS and CMs/SAS.

4: SKILLS DEVELOPMENT ACCESSIBILITY COORDINATOR (CON'T)

Referrals

- We are currently keeping track of all SDAS referrals within Nova Scotia Works Centres.
- If CMs have existing SDAS cases from 2025 onward, please email TEAM Work's SDAS Coordinator with details about the client and their case.
- For all new SDAS cases, please refer the case to TEAM Work's SDAS Coordinator through email by cc'ing the SDAS Coordinator in conversation with the client or by emailing the client's name and case details.

SDAS ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To qualify for the SDAS program, individuals must meet the following criteria:

- Be approved for the Skills Development program.

- Have a permanent disability as verified by a qualified professional.

- Self-identification is not an option..

Reminder: Only individuals approved for SD Program will be eligible for support under SDAS.

IS THE INDIVIDUAL ELIGIBLE FOR SDAS?

Is the individual approved or applying to the Skills Development Program?

YES

NO

Continue

Not eligible for SDAS
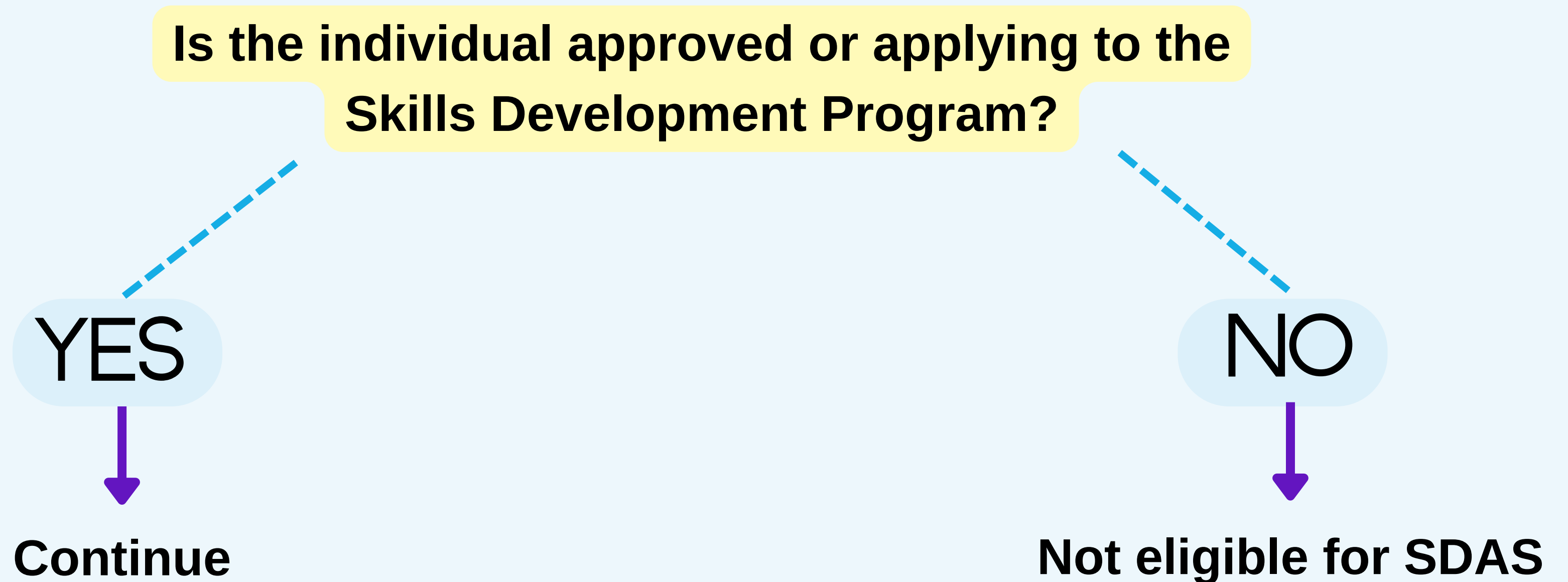
IS THE INDIVIDUAL ELIGIBLE FOR SDAS (CON'T)?

Does the individual have a permanent disability?
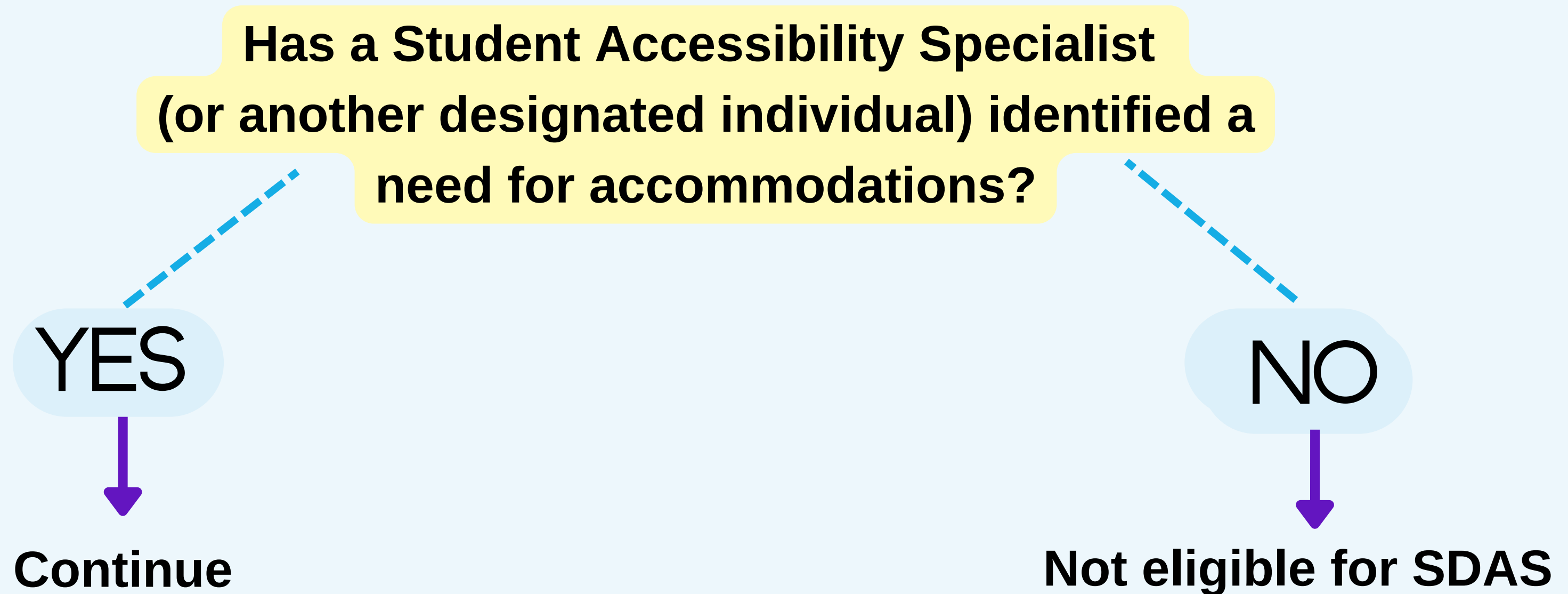
YES

NO

Continue

Not eligible for SDAS

Disability Verification Form must be completed &
Disability Assessment(s) may be required.

IS THE INDIVIDUAL ELIGIBLE FOR SDAS (CON'T)?

Has a Student Accessibility Specialist (or another designated individual) identified a need for accommodations?

YES

NO

Continue

Not eligible for SDAS

Please note: If the individual has not been referred to an SAS yet, the CM should initiate a referral before proceeding with an SDAS Application. If no SAS is available, please refer to TEAM Work's SDAS Coordinator.

APPLYING FOR SDAS

APPLICATIONS - BEFORE YOU BEGIN

The process of applying for SDAS may vary between individuals, largely depending on when disabilities are identified, accessed and documented

- **Early Intervention:** the individual is assessed for support either before the training program begins.

- **In-Progress Intervention:** The individual is assessed for support at any point while their training program is underway.

Please note: Our focus is on early intervention, as this is the most effective way to ensure that necessary supports are provided as soon as possible.

WHEN TO APPLY FOR SDAS

Individuals can apply for SDAS at any stage before or during their training program.

- Can apply with their Skills Development (SD) Program application.
- -or-
- Can apply after their Skills Development (SD) Program application.

** Please note: SDAS Applications should NOT be submitted <u>within the final 4 weeks</u> of the training program's end date.

- ENS will only accept a SDAS Application under exceptional circumstances in last 4 weeks.
- Case Manager must contact ENS directly prior to submitting a late SDAS Application Package.

1. SDAS Application Form (Required)

Page 1 of 4

Skills Development Accessibility Supports Application Form — NOVA SCOTIA

Before you apply

Skills Development Accessibility Supports (SDAS) provides financial assistance to students who have a permanent disability and are approved to participate in the Skills Development (SD) Program. Financial assistance under SDAS is intended to support the costs of equipment and/or services to help reduce or remove educational barriers that are caused by the disability and are directly related to the delivery of the training program.

You can apply for SDAS at any time during your training program. A Student Accessibility Specialist (or other designated individual) at your training institution and your Case Manager will work with you to complete your application.

Applicant Information

First name ___ Last name ___
Case ID ___ Date of birth ___

Nature of Disability

☐ Deaf, Hard of hearing ☐ Blind, low vision ☐ Physical
☐ ADD/ADHD ☐ Mental health ☐ Learning disability
☐ Other (e.g., Chronic illness, Head Injury, Cerebral Palsy, Cognitive, Autism Spectrum, etc.).
Please specify:

July 2023 — Page 1 of 4

Page 2 of 4

SDAS Request for Equipment or Services

Indicate below the equipment and/or services being requested.

Equipment Request

Your Case Manager will enter the rationale for the request based on the information from the Student Accessibility Specialist (or other designated individual) at your training institution.

Equipment Type	Rationale for the request
☐ Computer — Funding amount: Flat rate $900 — Quotes are not required	
☐ Assistive computer software — Funding amount – 100% of the cost — One (1) quote required	
☐ Assistive accessories — 100% of cost — Two (2) quotes required	
☐ Noise cancelling head phones — $200 flat rate — Quotes are not required	
☐ Alternative format learning materials — Funding amount – 100% of the cost — One (1) quote required	

Services Request

Additional information is required for each service requested.

☐ Tutor ☐ Academic coach
☐ Note taker ☐ Specialized service
☐ Learning disability assessment

July 2023 — Page 2 of 4

Page 3 of 4

Service Request – Tutor

Course Name	Service Start Date	Service End Date	# of hours per week	Hourly rate

Service Request – Note Taker

Course Name	Service Start Date	Service End Date	# of weeks	Course Rate

Service Request – other

Provide details and rationale for other services requested.

July 2023 — Page 3 of 4

Page 4 of 4

Notice for Applicants

Do not purchase equipment or services before you submit a SDAS Application Form to Employment Nova Scotia. Equipment and services purchased before you apply are not eligible for reimbursement.

If you purchase equipment and/or services after you apply to Employment Nova Scotia, but before your application is approved, you do so at your own risk. If your application is not approved, you are responsible for the expenses incurred.

If your application is approved, receipts are required to show proof of payment for all equipment and services.

Applicant's Declaration

The financial assistance requested is required to cover the cost of the equipment and/or services related to my disability(ies). I understand that I may be required to repay all or part of this assistance if the information is found to be inaccurate.

I hereby agree that I am required to retain all receipts which must be submitted to Employment Nova Scotia (ENS), and I will repay any funds for which I have no receipts or for funds that were paid to me and that I did not spend.

___ Applicant's signature ___ Date

July 2023 — Page 4 of 4

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT ACCESSIBILITY SUPPORTS
Disability Verification Form
For Students with Permanent Disabilities

NOVA SCOTIA · Canada

Student Information

Last Name:	First Name:	File Number:
Name of Post-Secondary Institution:	Program of Study:	Program Start Date:

Following Sections to be completed by Psychologist, Psychiatrist, Physician

Section 1: Verification of Permanent Disability

This form is used to collect and verify the student's permanent disability status for Employment Nova Scotia purposes. If verified, the student may be eligible for federal and/or provincial disability grants.

Verify below the student's permanent disability. For Psychiatric and Neurodevelopment Disorders, please use the DSM-5 clasifications. Additional information may be requested to support the diagnosis.

For Employment Nova Scotia purposes, a permanent disability is defined as a functional limitation caused by a physical or mental impairment that:

- Restricts the ability of a person to perform the daily activities necessary to participate in studies at a Post-Secondary school level or the labour force.
- Is expected to remain with the person for life.

Does the student have a permanent disability as defined above? Yes ☐ No ☐

Does the disability cause functional limitations as defined above? Yes ☐ No ☐

Section 2: Nature of Permanent Disability (fill in all that apply)

Physical Disability / Mobility Impairment
Specify disability:

Hearing Impairment (to be completed by Audiologist)
Specify disability:

Visual Impairment (to be completed by Ophthalmologist or Optometrist)
Specify disability:

Neurological Disability
Specify disability: ☐ Brain Injury ☐ Cerebral Palsy ☐ Epilepsy ☐ Multiple Sclerosis
Other – please specify: _____

Psychiatric Disorder
Specify disability:

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT ACCESSIBILITY SUPPORTS
Disability Verification Form
For Students with Permanent Disabilities

NOVA SCOTIA · Canada

Student Information

Student Name:	File Number:

Section 2: Nature of Permanent Disability (continued)

Neurodevelopmental Disorders

☐ Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder ☐ Autism Spectrum Disorder ☐ Intellectual Disabilities

☐ Other – please specify: _____

☐ Learning Disability: Student has two options for submission:
1. Uploading psycho-educational assessment (completed in the last 5 years or since the student was 18 years of age) **or**
2. Answering the three questions below by a physician or a psychologist:

Has a psycho-educational assessment been performed by a registered psychologist? Yes ☐ No ☐

Year of Assessment: _____   **Was a learning disability confirmed?** Yes ☐ No ☐

Other Chronic Disorders
Specify disability:

Name of Psychologist or Psychiatrist or Physician:	Indicate: Psychologist, Physician (Psychiatrist, Neurologist, Family Physician) or other
City / Town:	Province:	Licence#:
Signature of person verifying Permanent Disability	Date of Signature

Student's Signature: _____ Date: _____

2. SDAS Disability Verification Form (Required)

- Completed by qualified professional (i.e., psychologist, physician or doctor).

- If assessment already completed, attach existing assessments to form and have client sign form.

- **Case Manager Statement (Required)**
  - Includes overview of a client, their challenges, and how SDAS will benefit them - a rationale to support funding request. No form. Just a written statement.
- **Disability Assessment (if applicable)**
  - Completed by qualified professional. No form. Just a written statement.
  - May be required as a supporting document to confirm a permanent disability (submit as an attachment to Disability Verification Form).
  - Individuals are not required to share the entire disability assessment to be eligible for SDAS. Shared sections should include an individual's name, assessing professional's name/signature and recommendations, and the date completed.
- **Academic Accommodation Agreement (NSCC Specific)**
  - Completed by NSCC.
- **Receipt Form**
  - Once services or equipument is purchases, a receipt form is required.

SUBMITTING SDAS APPLICATION

- **LaMPSS** – if SDAS Application Package is being submitted at the same time as the SD Program application.

- **E-mail** – if SDAS Application Package is being submitted after the SD Program application has been submitted to Employment Nova Scotia.
  - **Cape Breton:** *LMDA-CB-Programs@novascotia.ca*
  - **Halifax:** *LMDA-HRM-Programs@novascotia.ca*
  - **Northern Nova Scotia:** *LMDA-Nrth-Pgms@novascotia.ca*
  - **South Shore Valley:** *LMDA-SSV-Programs@novascotia.ca*

OVERVIEW OF EQUIPMENT AND SERVICES

ELIGIBLE COSTS

Equipment

- Computer
- Assistive Computer Software (e.g., Dragon Naturally Speaking, JAWS Screen reader)
- Assistive Accessories (e.g., mouse or keyboard alternatives, digital recorder)
- Alternative Format Learning Materials (e.g., Braille products)

Services

- Tutor
- Note Taker
- Academic Coach
- Specialized services (e.g., Attendant care for studies, readers, interpreters, specialized transportation)

INELIGIBLE COSTS

SDAS cannot be used to cover or contribute to the following costs:

- Tuition, books or any other items that are considered general requirements for the program.
- Costs that are not related specifically to attending post-secondary training.
- Daily living equipment and services (e.g., glasses, hearing aids, watches, physiotherapy, adaptive furniture, etc.).
- Equipment or services purchased before applying for SDAS.
- Equipment or services supported through ENS's Technology Measures.
- Items or services that are available at no cost through the training institution (e.g., Microsoft Office).

ACCOMMODATED REDUCTIONS

- **Accommodated Reduction (AR)**
  - A reduced course load extends a program, allowing a student more time to finish. An AR prolongs the program with no penalty to the student.
  - AR is for students with verified, permanent disabilities only.
  - Based on eligibility, SAS approves the need for an AR and initiates the process.
  - A student with an AR is considered full-time status regardless of course load.

- **Application Process**
  - Schedule and plan provided by SAS from NSCC or other training institution.

ACADEMIC COACH

- An Academic Coach is an eligible service under SDAS.
- This service may be helpful if a student requires additional support from a third-party provider that cannot be provided by the SAS or training institution.
- Request for financial assistance under SDAS for an Academic Coach must include:
  - Qualifications of the individual providing service
  - Detailed rationale from an SAS or SDAS Coordinator.
- When to look for an academic coach?
  - For a specific disability, such as learning.
    - e.g., Autism coaches, ADHD coaches, etc.

NEW TECHNOLOGY

What can we do for clients who don't know how to use their required assistive technology?

- Student Accessibility Specialists - Nova Scotia Community College
- Libraries and Learning Commons - Nova Scotia Community College
  - https://www.nscc.ca/library/
- Occupational Therapists
- Neil Squire Society
  - Digital Jumpstart
  - Computer Comfort
  - Technology Assessments
- Internet, YouTube, and free 30-day trials to learn new software and technology.

TEAM WORK WEBSITE

- SDAS Go-To Guide
- Application forms
- Employment Nova Scotia's SD and SDAS Guideline PDFs
- This SDAS Info Session Presentation
- Link to ENS Skills Development website
- Contact information for TEAM Work and Employment Nova Scotia.

www.teamworkcooperative.ca/sdas

QUESTIONS?

Jarett Burke
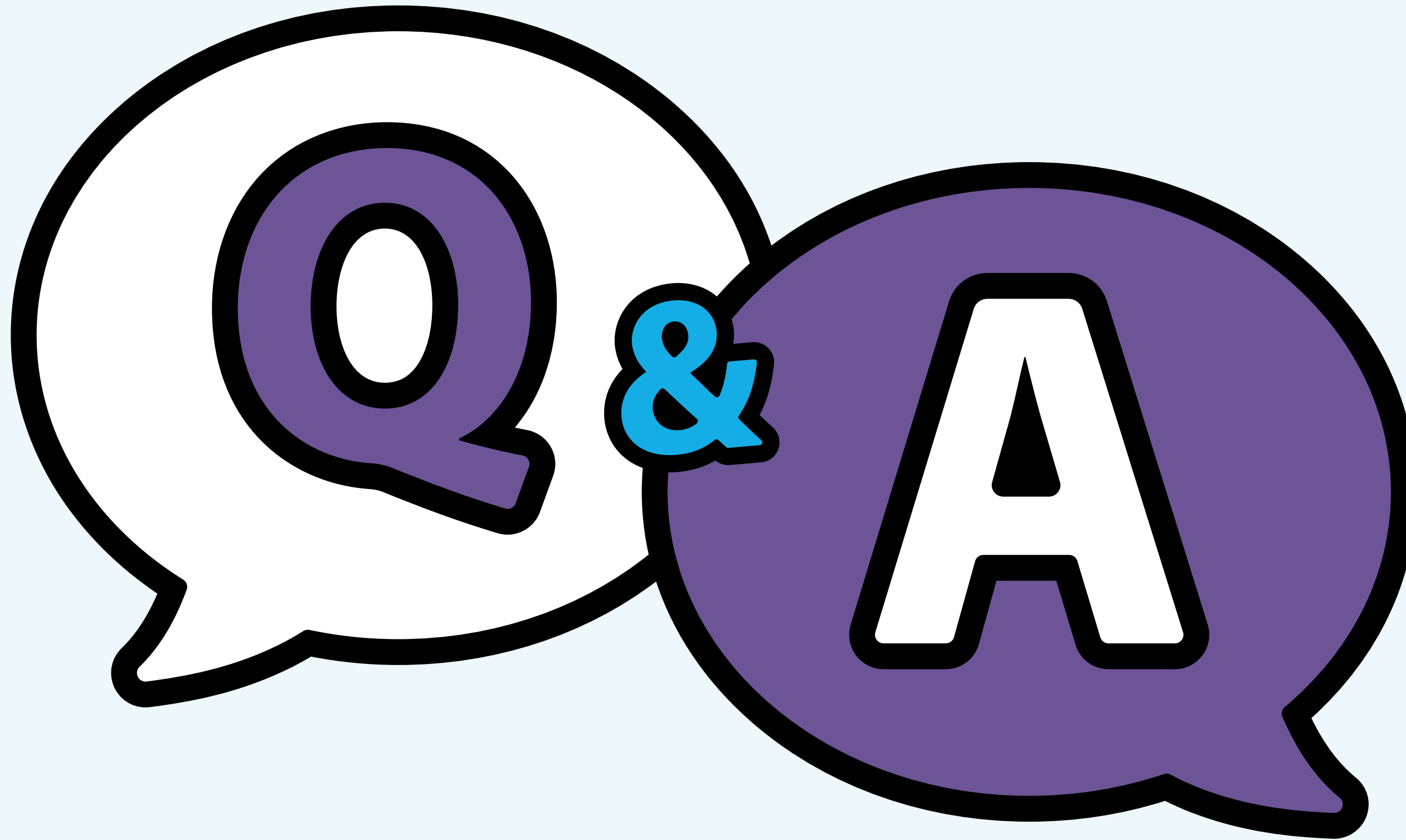
Skills Development Accessibility Coordinator

TEAM Work Cooperative / Nova Scotia Works

Email: jburke@teamworkbridge.org

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Please feel free to ask any questions!