



Guidelines for Disability Services

Learning Support Services
North Central Michigan College
2005



Welcome to **Learning Support Services** at North Central Michigan College.

Learning Support Services (LSS) is the department responsible for coordinating the supportive learning needs for the students of North Central. Included in that are all disability and special needs services. North Central Michigan College is committed to providing equal access to education for all students with documented disabilities.

Through LSS you can get accommodations in your courses such as extended testing time, note-taking assistance, assistive technology, tutoring, academic advising, and other tools to help you succeed. They requirements to get those services are quite different from high school. It is essential that you familiarize yourself with these differences and learn the law as it applies to you as an adult. Following are the requirements to obtain services through LSS. We're glad you're here.

Process for Requesting Accommodations

The accommodations process is addressed on an individual, case-by-case basis. Each student's needs are different depending on the disability and course-load. What works for one student may not work for another, so the circumstances for each individual must be assessed when services are required.

The process for receiving accommodations is:

1. Student discloses disability and registers with Learning Support Services (Disability Services), completing all necessary paperwork and documenting disability (see page 2 for guidelines).
2. Director and student discuss and determine specific recommended accommodations based on documentation and eligibility.
3. LSS provides student with written notification for faculty.
4. Student delivers memos to faculty and discusses with them arrangements for accommodations in the classroom, agreeing to a mutual understanding, conferring with LSS as needed.
5. If adjustments to accommodations are needed, students are responsible for contacting LSS for assistance. Modifications to accommodations can be made through LSS at any time; however, accommodations cannot be made retroactively.
6. Each new semester the student must contact LSS and request accommodations for classes. This process will not be done automatically.

Documentation

Students must provide written documentation of their disability from an appropriate licensed professional --- medical professional, appropriate expert, professional evaluator.

This documentation should:

- be dated within the last 3 years
- provide a diagnosis of the disability and include diagnostic evaluations, tests, or methods used in reaching that diagnosis
- explain current functional limitations
- include recommendations of accommodations if applicable
- be written on the professional's letterhead & signed by the evaluating professional

This documentation can come in many formats including letters from doctors, psychological evaluations, and diagnostic tests and is necessary to establish the need for services and the appropriateness of those services.

High school IEPs that include a summary evaluation and a psychologist's evaluation can serve as a reference and can be helpful, but they should not be the sole form of documentation as much of what they contain does not apply at the college level. Many colleges, especially 4-year schools, do not consider these acceptable forms of documentation at all.

- * LSS can sometimes provide professional referrals for diagnostic testing, but North Central cannot assist in obtaining a diagnosis of or do any testing for disabilities.
- * All information submitted to LSS will be kept confidential and shared with college personnel on a need-to-know basis.

Disability Law

It is the policy of North Central Michigan College to comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. These acts provide for equal opportunity for students with disabilities in educational activities, programs, and facilities. North Central is committed to affording equal opportunity to persons with disabilities. Staff, faculty, and students are expected to adhere to this philosophy.



A reasonable accommodation is defined as any change in an educational environment that effectively and appropriately enables an individual with a disability to have equal educational opportunities.

An accommodation is not reasonable when it:

- poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others OR
- requires a substantial change to an essential element of course curriculum OR
- requires a substantial alteration in the manner in which services are offered or provided for non-disabled students OR
- imposes an undue financial or administrative burden OR
- is a personal need such as a specialized tutor, a personal care attendant, individualized instruction

Reasonable accommodations are intended to provide an equal opportunity experience. They are not intended to provide an unfair advantage and are not a guarantee of success.

Dispute Resolution / Grievance Procedure

Should students encounter issues related to their disabilities or accommodations, they should first speak directly with the instructor to try to resolve the issue. If resolution is not achieved, they should contact the LSS Director, and LSS will work with college personnel and the student to resolve any such instances.

If an acceptable resolution is not reached, then any student denied accommodations or academic adjustments may appeal the decision to the ADA Grievance Committee. This appeal must be made in writing within five working days of the denial of services, and the student and faculty/staff cited in the grievance are required to attend a meeting in person to participate in the resolution process. The ADA Grievance Committee is comprised of the Dean of Instruction, the academic director for the course in question, the ADA/504 compliance officer, and the Learning Support Services Director.

Rights and Responsibilities

Each student with a documented disability has the right to receive from North Central Michigan College:

- Equal access to courses, programs, services, jobs, activities, and facilities offered through the College.
- Equal opportunity to work, learn, and receive reasonable, effective, and appropriate accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services.
- Appropriate confidentiality of all information regarding their disability and to choose whom information about their disability will be disclosed, except as required by law.
- Information readily available in accessible formats.

North Central Michigan College has the right to:

- Identify and establish essential functions, abilities, skills, knowledge, standards, and criteria for courses, programs, jobs, and activities and evaluate students based on their performance.
- Request and receive current documentation from an appropriate licensed professional source that supports requests for accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services.
- Deny a request for accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids or services if the documentation demonstrates that the request is not warranted, the documentation presented fails to identify a specific disability, or the student fails to provide appropriate documentation in a timely manner.
- Select among equally effective and appropriate accommodations, adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services in consultation with students with documented disabilities and in collaboration with faculty and staff who have contact with them.
- Refuse to make available an accommodation, adjustment, and/or auxiliary aid or service that is inappropriate, ineffective, or unreasonable.



Each student with a disability has the responsibility to:

- Meet qualifications and maintain essential institutional standards for courses, programs, services, jobs, and activities, e.g. complete assigned work in courses taken.
- Identify themselves in a timely manner as an individual with a disability when an accommodation is needed, preferably prior to the start of classes.
- Seek information, counsel, and assistance as necessary from the Learning Support Services staff.
- Provide documentation from an appropriate licensed professional source describing the nature of the disability and how the disability is a functional limitation.
- Follow established procedures for obtaining effective and appropriate accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services.
- Be fully active in the accommodation process of their education.

North Central Michigan College has the responsibility to:

- Provide information regarding policies and procedures to students with disabilities and assure that this information be provided in accessible formats upon request.
- Ensure that courses, programs, services, jobs, activities and facilities are available and accessible in the most integrated and appropriate settings.
- Evaluate students and applicants on their abilities and potential, not their disabilities.
- Provide or arrange for effective, appropriate, and reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids and services in courses, programs, services, jobs, and activities for students with identified disabilities.
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality of records and communication concerning students with disabilities except where disclosure is required by the law or authorized by the student.

Assistive Technology Available through Learning Support Services

AlphaSmart Keyboard
Magni-Viewer
Dragon Naturally Speaking
Scan and Read
Books on Tape/e-file
Franklin Speller
Reading Pen
Sony Voice Recorder
Digital Voice Recorder
Carbonless notebooks

Common Accommodations

Extended Testing Time
Alternate Testing Location
Note-taking/advanced notes
Test Reader
Test Scribe
Interpreter Service
Enlarged Copy
Special Seat Location
Course Substitution

Six Primary Student Responsibilities

To Be Qualified

1. Meet academic and technical standards.
2. The duty to be qualified is not limited to academic programs.
3. The question of reasonable accommodation must always be answered.

To Provide Notice and Make a Specific Request

1. The standard is: the institution knew or should have known.
2. Notice doesn't have to be in writing and there are no magic words.
3. Notice or request must be made in a reasonable and timely manner.
4. A subsequent declaration of disability and request for accommodation cannot convert a lawful decision into a violation.

To Adhere to Institutional Policies and Procedures Regarding Accommodation Requests

1. Accommodation requests must be submitted to the proper office or individual.
2. Provide documentation that establishes the existence of a disability and supports the need for the accommodations requested.
3. Respond to requests for additional information in a timely manner.
4. The student cannot interfere with the institution's right to have the documentation reviewed by appropriate experts.

To Fully Participate in the Accommodation Process

1. It is an interactive process.
2. Although the personal preferences of the student should be considered, the standard is to provide effective accommodations.
3. The student must exercise due diligence to make sure that the process works.
4. The student's parents cannot be his/her stand-in or mouthpiece.

To Use Accommodations Appropriately

1. The student's participation must be timely and reasonable.
2. Objections to accommodations offered must be supported by objective evidence.
3. Maintain a proper relationship with individuals who are providing accommodations, including LSS staff.

To adhere to Institutional Standards of Conduct

1. The disability does not insulate the student from the disciplinary rules and procedures enforced with respect to the general student population.
2. The accommodation, if any, should be directed towards assisting the student in meeting the standards.