

# Documentation Guidelines for Disabilities Resulting from Head Injury/Traumatic Brain Injury\*\*

## Policy

Federal law (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990) and the Americans with Disabilities Amendment Act of 2008 established the rights of individuals with disabilities. Northern State University is committed to compliance with all applicable federal laws and regulations regarding reasonable accommodations needed to provide equal educational opportunity to all students. Final determination as to the appropriateness of an accommodation is evaluated on a case-by-case basis. In accordance with federal and state regulations, disability-related information will be treated in a confidential manner.

## Procedure

The student is responsible for providing documentation that supports his/her request for accommodation services. It is important that the documentation clearly establishes that the student has a disability as defined by federal regulations and that the documentation clearly supports the individual's request for accommodation. The following documentation guidelines are provided in the interest of ensuring that documentation of a traumatic brain injury demonstrates a significant impact on a major life activity and supports the individual's request for accommodation.

## Documentation Guidelines

### **1. A qualified professional must conduct the evaluation:**

It is important that the evaluator have comprehensive training and direct experience with adolescents and adults with traumatic brain injury, such as a licensed psychologist or neuropsychologist or rehabilitation specialist in brain injury. The name, title, and professional credentials of the evaluator, including information about license or certification and employment, should be clearly stated in the documentation. All reports should be on letterhead, dated, signed, and otherwise legible.

## **2. Documentation should be current:**

The provision of accommodations is based upon assessment of the current impact of the student's disabilities on his or her academic performance and learning style. Documentation that is outdated or inadequate in scope or content; does not address the student's current level of functioning; or does not address changes in the student's performance since the previous assessment was conducted; or was done before the student was one year post injury may be inadequate to support requested accommodations. When appropriate, additional supportive documentation will be requested.

## **3. Documentation necessary to substantiate a disability should include:**

- a. Diagnostic interview with report describing presenting problems, medical, psychosocial, or dual diagnosis where indicated;
- b. Assessment of aptitude post injury with all sub-tests and standard scores reported;
- c. Achievement measures since injury with all sub-tests and standard scores reported;
- d. A summary of present residual symptoms, which meet the criteria for diagnosis;
- e. Medical information relating to student's needs should include the impact of medication on the student's ability to meet the demands of the postsecondary environment;
- f. A statement of the functional impact or limitation of the disability on learning or other major life activity and the degree to which it impacts the individual in the learning context for which the accommodations are being recommended;
- g. Information-processing style with test scores and recommendations in the learning environment.

## **4. Interpretive summary based on comprehensive evaluative process:**

An interpretive summary should include a demonstration of the evaluator's having ruled out alternative explanations for academic problems (e.g., poor education, poor motivation, emotional problems, attentional problems and cultural/language differences); indication of patterns of student's cognitive ability, achievement, and/or information processing reflecting the presence of a disability; indication of a substantial limitation to learning or other major life activity presented by the disability and the degree of impact in the learning context; indication of why specific accommodations or auxiliary aids are needed and specific conditions under which they were used in the past. Medical information, as appropriate, should include the impact of medication on the student's ability to meet the demands in a postsecondary environment.

## **5. Recommendations for accommodations:**

- a. Include specific recommendations and rationale for

- accommodations;
- b. Include a description of the impact of the diagnosed TBI on specific major life activities;
- c. Recommendations should be supported by specific test results and/or clinical observations.

**\*\*These guidelines are not meant to be used exclusively or as a replacement for direct communication with Student Accessibility Services regarding the individual nature of a disability. While submitted documentation meeting the above guidelines may be acceptable to Student Accessibility Services at NSU, it is important to be mindful that they may/may not meet the documentation guidelines required in other academic or testing organizations.**