

# Documentation Guidelines for Psychiatric/Psychological Disabilities\*\*

## 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 learning disability 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:**

A qualified professional must conduct an evaluation. Professionals conducting assessments and rendering diagnoses should have appropriate training in diagnosing psychological/psychiatric disorders. 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. Alternatively, the qualified professional may complete and return the *Accessibility Assessment Form* to the Student Accessibility Services office.

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

The provision of accommodations is based upon assessment of the current

impact of the student's disabilities. Documentation that is outdated or inadequate in scope or content; does not address the student's current level of functioning; or does not address changes in the student's performance since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 may not support requested accommodations. When appropriate, additional supportive documentation will be requested. Documentation will generally be considered current if it has been completed within the last six (6) months.

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

- a. A statement, on letterhead, by a qualified health professional. Qualified diagnosing professionals would include licensed psychologists, psychiatrists, neurologist, clinical social workers, and, in some instances, general practice physicians;
- b. A summary of assessment procedures, evaluation instruments used to make the diagnosis, and a summary of evaluation results;
- c. The statement should include a specific diagnosis, the nature of the disability, functional limitations, current status of the student, and any recommendations for support. These recommendations should be supported by the evaluation;
- d. The statement should include the date of diagnosis, the date of first contact with the student, and the date of last contact with the student;
- e. Statement should include the current treatment plan (e.g. medication, counseling, etc.) and the student's response to treatment;
- f. When warranted, medical information relating to the student should also include the impact of medication on the student's ability to meet the demands in the postsecondary environment;
- g. Specific accommodation recommendations and a rationale as to why the accommodation is necessary, and an explanation of why accommodations are recommended for equal access if the student is responding positively to the current treatment plan.

**\*\*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.**