

Volume S1: Student Affairs	S1.3 Reasonable Accommodations for Students with Disabilities	Responsible Office: Student Disability Services
	Effective Date: 03/04/15	Responsible Officer: Director of Student Disability Services

POLICY STATEMENT

Northeastern Illinois University complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 which states that “No otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States... shall, solely by reason of his (or her) handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance....” In addition, Northeastern complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, which states that “A reasonable accommodation” shall be granted to those who qualify under the definition set forth by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 2008.

PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

To ensure students with disabilities are given their rights to access and equal opportunity.

WHO IS AFFECTED BY THIS POLICY

Students with disabilities as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

DEFINITIONS

Disability: (as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 2008): An individual with a disability is a person who: (1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; OR (2) has a record of such impairment; OR (3) is regarded as having such impairment.

Key Parties: University employees with general or specific responsibility for promoting the educational objectives of the University or third parties under contract with the University to provide professional, business and similar administrative services related to the University's educational mission. Individuals whose responsibilities place them within this category include instructors; faculty advisers; academic advisers; counselors; deans, department chairpersons, directors, and other administrative officials responsible for some part of the academic enterprise or one of the supporting activities; University Police personnel; health staff.

Reasonable Accommodation: As defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, a reasonable accommodation is considered to be a modification or adjustment to a course, program, service, or facility, which ensures that a qualified student with a disability is not excluded, segregated, or otherwise treated differently.

REGULATIONS

[Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990](#)
[Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 794 \(Section 504\)](#)
[Title II, ADA Amendments Act of 2008](#)
[Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#)



PROCEDURES

A. SCOPE OF SERVICES

Student Disability Services (SDS) assumes responsibility for seeing that the University is properly interpreting federal regulations requiring that the University take such steps as are necessary to ensure that no qualified student with disabilities is denied the benefits of, excluded from participation in, or otherwise subjected to discrimination because of the absence of educational auxiliary aids for students with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills.

Student Disability Services is responsible for receiving and coordinating inquiries from students regarding auxiliary aids, academic adjustments, or other reasonable accommodations. The University Affirmative Action Officer is responsible for coordinating the University's compliance with these regulations.

B. REQUEST FOR SERVICES

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 2008, reasonable accommodations must be available to students with disabilities choosing to attend an institution of higher education. Under ADA, students pursuing a post-secondary education are responsible for documenting and requesting accommodations for their specific needs. Students are responsible for identifying themselves as students who have a disability. The student must provide the University with appropriate documentation regarding their disability and recommended accommodations. Students are responsible for requesting specific academic adjustments or accommodations according to their documented needs.

Eligibility for reasonable accommodations in post-secondary institutions is driven by the federal definition of disability as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits or restricts the conditions, manner, or duration under which an average person in the general population can perform a major life activity, such as walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working, or taking care of oneself. In a university setting, students must advocate for their own academic needs.

Accommodations do not transfer from one place to another. Each request is case-by-case and unique to each environment (i.e., the level of support in a high school may be different from that in a higher education environment; the level of support from one higher education environment to another can also vary widely.)

The following procedures are applied to requests for auxiliary aids, academic adjustments, or other reasonable accommodations. Students must complete the steps listed in this policy sufficiently in advance of the anticipated need for services. Such notice is required in order to give the various academic and service areas a reasonable period of time in which to evaluate requests. Ideally, students should apply for accommodations 2 weeks in advance of when services are needed. But, the timeline needed for the student to complete the application process and for SDS to fulfill requests differs based on the type of accommodation requested.

1. Students must be admitted to and/or enrolled in the University.
2. Forms and supporting documentation submissions:
 - a. Student Request for Accommodations Form: Students requesting auxiliary aids, academic adjustments, or other reasonable accommodations must first complete and submit to the Student Disability Services office the Student Request for Accommodations form. The document informs Student Disability Services of the type of accommodations being requested, what accommodations the student has received in the past, and how the student describes their disability.
 - b. Provider Report for Accommodation Request Form: If the request requires modification of academic procedural requirements or necessitates special testing and/or course evaluation methods, students must submit a provider's report from a professional clinician. Such report is subject to verification by the University. The report must be completed by the clinician and mailed to Student Disability Services. If a student is seeking accommodations for a learning disability, ADHD, or other psychological disabilities, the Provider Report form must be completed by a licensed psychologist/psychiatrist. If a student is seeking accommodations for a physical disability (deaf/hard of hearing, low vision, or bone/muscle/neurological disabilities), the Provider Report form must be



completed by a qualified medical provider. If a student does not have a clinician, SDS will supply a list of qualified clinicians (not a list of recommendations).

- c. Supporting Documentation: Other supporting documents may be required to verify a needed accommodation and if so, will be requested by SDS. Any other supporting documentation will need to be submitted with the previous 3 forms. These could include IEP/504 paperwork, a letter of approval for accommodations from the College Board, or a letter from a previous institution outlining the accommodations that were approved. All documentation must be no older than 3 years prior to the date of the accommodation request. If the documentation is outdated, the student may be eligible to receive temporary accommodations while obtaining the updated documentation.
 - d. Authorization for Release of Information Form: The form is mandatory for all students seeking services with Student Disability Services. This enables Student Disability Services to read students' information and share it with key parties. Key parties are those who need to know what students' accommodations are, in order for students' accommodations to be implemented effectively. Key parties are trained in Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and other privacy mandates. Confidentiality is respected at all times.
3. Student Disability Services makes a case-by-case determination of the student's educational need for the reasonable accommodations. Reasonable accommodations determined to be necessary are provided at no cost to the student.

C. APPROVAL/DENIAL OF REQUESTED ACCOMMODATIONS

SDS schedules an appointment (within 10 business days from submitting the request for accommodations, along with proper documentation) to notify the student of whether their request for accommodations has been approved or denied.

Approved Requests for Accommodations:

If the student's request was approved, Student Disability Services discusses the following subjects with the student: (i) How an accommodation can be implemented; (ii) SDS policies for utilizing certain accommodations; (iii) Resources available on and off campus for the purpose of receiving a full range of support; and (iv) the Accommodation Determination Letter (ADL) and how to utilize the document. Students approved for accommodations are responsible for taking the following steps to ensure accommodations are implemented.

1. The student will receive a copy of the Accommodations Determination Letter via NEIU email. After receipt, the student should store the ADL in a safe place for future reference as it is an official document belonging to the student for the duration of their studies unless otherwise specified. Students must not tamper with, write on, or otherwise alter the ADL. Copies are mailed to key parties for verification upon request.
2. If necessary, students must share the ADL with their professors before the start of the semester. In many cases, professors are part of the accommodation process, and letting them know in a timely fashion will ease the implementation process.
3. Note-Taking Services: If approved for note-taking services, students must fill out the online Note-Taking Request form 2 weeks prior to the start of each semester or as soon as possible.
4. Sign-Language Interpreter: If approved for a sign-language interpreter, students must contact SDS's Sign Language Interpreter (SDS@neiu.edu) 3 weeks prior to the start of the semester or as soon as possible.
5. Extended Time for Exams: If approved for extended time for completing exams, students must complete the online Exam Appointment Request form 2 weeks prior to the scheduled time of the exam. It is also the student's responsibility to notify the professor at least 2 weeks prior to the exam. SDS will contact the student to schedule the appointment to take the exam. The latest time a student may begin an extended time exam is 2:30 pm.



Denied Requests for Accommodations:

If the student's request was denied, Student Disability Services discusses with the student: (i) the reason(s) why the request for accommodations was denied; (ii) other actions that can be taken and alternative reasonable accommodation(s); and (iii) the appeal process.

In accordance with the Americans With Disabilities Act, reasons for denying a request for accommodations may include, but are not limited to:

- If making the accommodation means making a substantial change in an essential nature of a program or element of the curriculum;
- If it poses an undue financial or administrative burden; or
- If the accommodations create a direct threat to the health or safety of others.

D. APPEALS

1. The first step in an appeal is for the student to meet with the Director of Student Disability Services to discuss the student's case and attempt to resolve the appeal.
2. If the student continues to believe their request for accommodations should not have been denied and the student cannot come to a resolution with the Director for Student Disability Services, the student may file a discrimination grievance with the Director of Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action and Ethics Compliance. Any request for accommodations that has been denied but should have been granted by definition of federal laws is considered discrimination. Students who believe that they have been discriminated against on the basis of a disability can seek resolution through the University's Discrimination Grievance Procedure.
3. Information and consultation on these procedures are available through the Director of Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action and Ethics Compliance, Room C-628, ext. 5412.

AUTHOR REFERENCE

(See Regulations section above and History section below)

HISTORY

Formerly Administrative Memorandum No. 39: Services for Students with Disabilities, Effective Dated 3/1/1995

RELATED POLICIES AND OTHER INFORMATIONAL MATERIAL

- [Student's Request for Accommodations](#)
- [Authorization for Release of Information](#)
- [Provider Report](#)
- [Note-Taking Request Form](#)
- [Exam Appointment Request Form](#)

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please direct questions or concerns about this policy to:

Contact	Phone	E-Mail
Director, Student Disability Services	773-442-4595	SDS@neiu.edu



DISCLAIMER

The University reserves the right to modify or amend sections of this policy at any time at its sole discretion. This policy remains in effect until such time as the Responsible Officer calls for review. Requests for exception to any portion of this policy, but not to the policy statement, must be presented in writing to the Responsible Officer.