Disability Accommodation, Documentation and Process

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I. Purpose

I. Purpose & Scope of Policy

Northwest Missouri State University (“Northwest” or “University”) does not discriminate on the basis of disability in its admission, recruitment, academics, housing, research, financial aid, counseling, employment assistance, and/or any other service, facility, or privilege available to students or potential students. It is the University’s policy to provide individuals with qualified disabilities full and equal enjoyment of the services, facilities, and privileges of the University.

A. Definition of Disability

The University is committed to students’ equal access to programs, services and activities in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADA) of 2008. Under these laws, a person has a disability if he/she:

- has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities (such as walking, standing, seeing, speaking, hearing, sitting, breathing, reading, learning, performing manual tasks, caring for oneself);
- has a record or history of such impairment; or
- is regarded as having such impairment.
The degree to which a disability imposes a functional limitation on the student’s ability to perform a major life activity is a significant determining factor in establishing the need for accommodations. The University promotes an environment of respect and support for individuals with disabilities, and will make reasonable accommodations for such individuals pursuant to applicable law.

II. Policy

II. Accommodation of Disabilities

Students with disabilities as defined by applicable law have the right to request reasonable accommodations from the University. Prospective students must meet established entrance criteria and be accepted to the University through the Admissions Office before seeking disability-related accommodations. Where applicable, the University will make reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities.

Reasonable accommodations under this Policy may include reasonable modifications to the University’s policies, practices, and procedures where necessary for individuals with disabilities, unless doing so would alter requirements that are essential to the instruction being pursued or to licensing requirements. When applicable, the University will also provide necessary and reasonable auxiliary aids and services for individuals with disabilities. The University strives to remove barriers for individuals with disabilities and to provide services, facilities, and privileges to achieve equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities. Examples of some areas in which reasonable accommodations may be available include, but are not limited to: classroom and/or testing situations, academic support, access to facilities, assistive technology (enlarged print, text-to-speech programs, accessible textbooks, etc.), registration, and extracurricular University activities including athletics, dining and parking.

In setting forth this Policy, however, it is important to note that some professions for which the University may offer programs may have certain cognitive, sensory, affective, and/or psychomotor functional requirements that are essential functional requirements for the profession. Thus, individuals must be able to meet those functional requirements, with or without reasonable accommodation, in order to participate in the University’s programs. For information on such functional abilities essential to professions for which the University offers programs, individuals should consult with:

**Learning Assistance Providers/Services (LAP/S) Committee**
Northwest Missouri State University
800 University Drive
Maryville, MO 64468
660.562.1639 (Tel.)
660.562.1043 (Fax)
Email: ada@nwmissouri.edu
III. Requesting Accommodation

Students bear the responsibility for disclosure of a disability and the request for reasonable accommodations. The University’s Learning Assistance Providers/Services (“LAP/S”) Committee, in consultation with the individual, faculty, staff, and other departments as necessary, focus on assessing each individual’s situation to identify needs and appropriate, reasonable accommodations. Both supportive documentation (as relevant) and a confidential interview with the student help to provide needed information. The following contact information should be used to seek information regarding disability accommodation and/or request a reasonable accommodation:

LAP/S Committee
Northwest Missouri State University
800 University Drive
Maryville, MO 64468
800.633.1639 (Tel.)
660.562.1043 (Fax)
Email: ada@nwmissouri.edu

An individual with a disability who has been accepted to the University and who is seeking accommodation should submit the following materials to the LAP/S Committee:

1. **Application.** An application for accommodation will be completed during the required intake meeting with a LAP/S Committee member. The application asks individuals who request accommodations to provide a description of the condition(s) for which they are seeking accommodation, past accommodations sought and/or provided, and the individual’s explanation of the condition’s likely impact on educational experiences at the University, in addition to other pertinent information. Written explanations are helpful and encouraged when possible, though they may also be received or supplemented by interview or other means. Intake meeting requests can be made through the aforementioned contact information. Meetings can be conducted in-person, by phone, or web-based video/messaging platforms.

2. **Supporting Documentation.** Documentation is an important tool for determining qualification for accommodation, reasonable accommodations, and developing a plan for providing such accommodations. Northwest utilizes the national Association on Higher Education for Disability and the Missouri Association for Higher Education and Disability’s definitions of quality disability documentation that both establishes the individual as a person with a disability and provides a rationale for reasonable accommodations. Appropriate documentation will vary depending on the nature of the condition being considered; for example, certain long-term, observable physical conditions may have limited documentation
requirements for accommodation determinations. Acceptable documentation may:

- Be an individualized education program (IEP) or 504 plan.
- Be completed by a qualified licensed professional who is knowledgeable in the field of the student's particular disability.
- Be based upon adult level norms.
- Be no older than three years, unless the diagnoses are based upon adult level norms. (Certain long-term medical and health conditions may not be subject to this element. ex: blindness).
- Include a statement of diagnosis.
- Include a description of the student's current functioning and/or the current status of the disability.
- Relate how the student's disability affects his/her learning in a post-secondary educational setting.
- Include recommendations for appropriate post-secondary accommodations.
- Be dated and signed by the licensed professional.
- Include information regarding medication the student may be using and treatment he/she may be undergoing. This also should include the medication or treatment's impact on the student's ability to function in an academic setting.
- Examples of tests accepted for documentation of a learning disability include: WAIS, WJ-Cognitive, Stanford Binet, WIAT, WJ- Achievement. Other tests may be accepted if based upon adult norms.
- A disability such as deafness can be verified by the results of an audiogram administered by an audiologist. Medical doctors' statements verify orthopedic impairments present at birth or as a result of later injuries.
- Northwest does not provide the extensive medical and learning disability testing needed to document a disability. Students may request names of agencies and professionals who perform the in-depth assessment required for acceptable documentation from a LAP/S Committee member.

If an individual does not have copies of this type of information, the individual is welcome to meet with appropriate LAP/S Committee personnel to discuss obtaining such information and/or other materials that may assist in establishing the existence of a disability requiring accommodation, demonstrating the impact of a disability on the educational experience, and/or evaluating available reasonable accommodations. The LAP/S Committee reserves the right to request additional or more recent documentation at the student’s expense.

When submitting materials, the individual should consider the following questions: (a) How does my condition(s) affect or how may it affect my
educational experience or participation at the University? (b) What tools or strategies facilitate my access at the University, and what has been successful or unsuccessful in the past? And, (c) What barriers can I anticipate to my educational experience or participation at the University based on my condition(s)?

Medical information provided by an individual pursuant to this Policy will be kept confidential to the extent possible, except that information may be shared as necessary to implement accommodations.

3. **Timeframe for Submission.** Documentation must be submitted within a reasonable time frame. Determination of eligibility for accommodations, development of plans for providing reasonable accommodations, and implementing reasonable accommodations for many conditions may require ample notice. To obtain accommodations by the start of an academic period, the individual should contact the LAP/S Committee as soon as possible and preferably at least three (3) weeks before the first day of classes. Such notice allows individuals and the University a reasonable period of time to engage in the process set forth in this Policy. The LAP/S Committee should be consulted for more information regarding documentation and the timeframe for submission.

IV. **Procedure Following Request for Accommodation**

A. **Initial Meeting with LAP/S Committee Member**

Following the process outlined in Part III of the Policy above, an LAP/S Committee member will contact the applicant to schedule a confidential initial meeting and discuss the request for accommodation.

B. **Review of Supporting Documentation**

Following the initial meeting with an LAP/S Committee member, the LAP/S Committee will review the materials submitted by the individual, with the assistance of an outside medical professional (if necessary). More relevant or current documentation may be requested. Reasonable accommodations are determined through the collaboration of the LAP/S Committee, the individual, appropriate faculty, individual departments, and outside professionals (as warranted), with consideration for essential standards of courses, programs, services and activities, or status of facilities.

C. **Accommodation Letters**

When a reasonable accommodation is deemed necessary, the LAP/S Committee will develop a plan identifying the student’s condition(s) requiring accommodation, the circumstances under which accommodations are needed, and the reasonable accommodations recommended by the LAP/S Committee in the collaborative process described above. The
University will involve the individual, as well as the collaborators (as appropriate), in developing the plan. The individual's participation in developing the plan is strongly encouraged to ensure mutual understanding and accomplishment of the plan’s goals.

Information in the plan developed by the LAP/S Committee will be outlined in an accommodation letter, which the individual will present to faculty and staff. The accommodation letter contains no confidential information about the student’s disability. The accommodation letter is recognized campus-wide as verification that the student is a qualified student with a disability. It is the student’s responsibility to keep the accommodation letter, make copies of it and distribute it to instructors and other University personnel as needed each trimester. Faculty members are expected to assist with provision of accommodations when reasonable and necessary without compromise to essential elements of the course or evaluation standards. If agreed-upon accommodations are not implemented in an effective or timely manner, the student is encouraged to contact the LAP/S Committee.

If an accommodation is provided, then the accommodation applies on a prospective basis. For example, an accommodation provided does not apply to course work completed before the request for and implementation of the accommodation provided. The LAP/S Committee arranges for the accommodation(s). However, it is the individual’s responsibility to establish and maintain communication with his/her instructors and for the individual to keep up with his/her responsibilities.

D. Reevaluation

A reevaluation of a request for accommodation may be initiated by contacting any LAP/S Committee member. In circumstances where students and the LAP/S Committee are unable to reach agreement on accommodations, appeals should be directed to the Faculty Senate Access and Accommodations Committee by contacting the ADA/504 Compliance Coordinator at:

Rebecca Lawrence, J.D.
ADA/504 Compliance Coordinator
Northwest Missouri State University
800 University Drive
Maryville, MO 64468
660.562.1013 (Tel.)
660.562.1093 (Fax)
Email: rebecca@nwmissouri.edu

V. Temporary Accommodations

The University recognizes that the disability accommodation process under this Policy may take time. As a result, it is important that an individual requesting accommodation promptly provide all information required under this Policy to allow the LAP/S Committee to function. In some cases, however, the process cannot be completed before an accommodation must be implemented. As a result, on a case by case basis and when reasonable, a temporary
accommodation may be implemented pending completion of the disability accommodation process under this Policy. Such a temporary accommodation is implemented solely based on the need for additional time to complete the disability accommodation process, and shall be in place only until the disability accommodation process is completed. The provision of a temporary accommodation should not be construed in any way as a reflection of eligibility for accommodation or a determination as to the reasonableness of the accommodation provided. The provision of a temporary accommodation does not in any way change the requirements of this Policy, nor is a student relieved of meeting those requirements.

VI. Maintaining Contact with the LAP/S Committee

Each individual requesting and/or receiving a reasonable accommodation under this Policy is encouraged to maintain close contact with the LAP/S Committee and his/her instructors. Additionally, the individual is encouraged to provide feedback as to the effectiveness of accommodations provided.

VII. Concerns and Complaints

Any individual who has concerns about accommodations provided or not provided or who wishes to submit a complaint about discrimination or harassment based on disability should contact the ADA/504 Compliance Coordinator, the Dean of their department, and/or the University President. The University endeavors to provide prompt and equitable resolution to student concerns.