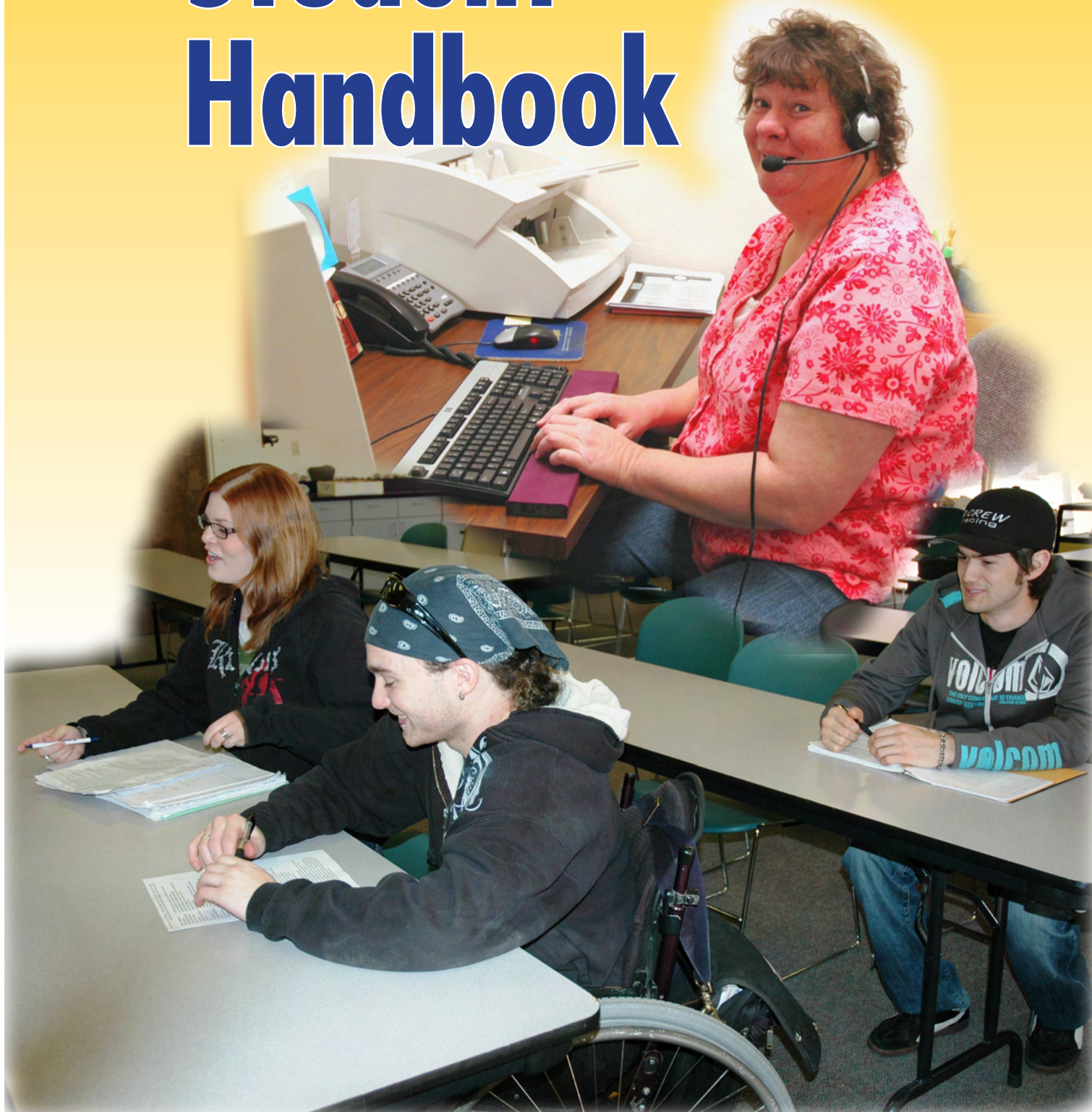




WESTERN NEVADA COLLEGE

DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES

# Student Handbook



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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This handbook has been prepared to explain the policies and procedures of Disability Support Services at Western Nevada College.

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# INTRODUCTION

The Disability Support Services office was established to provide reasonable academic accommodations to students with documented disabilities and to insure equal access to all Western Nevada College sponsored courses and activities in compliance with Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. It is the responsibility of this office to collect and maintain documentation for students with disabilities, who request services, and to coordinate and monitor all services and accommodations provided by WNC.

Academic accommodations are provided to students with disabilities based on the needs indicated by the documentation they provide. (See "Guidelines" beginning on page 13 of this handbook). When the needs of the students change, the documentation should be updated to reflect the changes.

The DSS coordinator's office is on the Carson City campus, in the Student Services area of Bristlecone Building, co-located within Counseling Services. The DSS coordinator works full-time to: coordinate academic accommodations for disabled students, answer any questions, or help solve any problems that may arise due to a documented disability. Additional resources for qualified disabled students include a variety of adaptive equipment to insure equal access to all WNC sponsored courses and activities.

All students receiving accommodations through the WNC DSS office are required to comply with certain policies and procedures. Students should refer to the "What Are My Responsibilities as a College Student," and "Policies and Procedures" portions of this handbook to familiarize themselves with responsibilities, policies, and procedures.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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WNC declares and reaffirms a policy of equal employment opportunity and equal educational opportunity, and reaffirms nondiscrimination in the provision of educational and other public services. (WNC Policy Manual: Policy 4-2-1)

WNC seeks to provide effective services and accommodations for qualified individuals with documented disabilities. The type of documentation will depend on the type of disability.

WNC is committed to compliance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990:

A. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: “No other qualified, handicapped individual in the United States shall solely, by reason of his 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.”

B. Section 202 of the Americans with Disability Act of 1990: “No qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from the participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs or activities of any public entity, or be subject to discrimination by any such entity.”

A “person with a disability” includes “any person who (1) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of such person’s major life activities; (2) has a record of such an impairment; or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment.”

# RESPONSIBILITIES

## What are my Responsibilities as a College Student?

It is my responsibility to identify myself to the DSS coordinator and to provide professional documentation of my disability in order to qualify for academic accommodations.

After registration, I will meet with the disability coordinator each semester to make arrangements for academic accommodations that are specific to the courses I am enrolled in. I understand that planning ahead is very important, and that last minute requests may not be feasible.

It is my responsibility to present the Notification of Accommodation form to my instructors during the first week of each semester. This form will identify the accommodations that I am entitled to for each of my classes.

I am expected to adhere to the same academic, attendance, and code-of-conduct standards required of all students.

Academic accommodations for a disability are not intended to alter the fundamental nature of a course or program. I must be able to comprehend the course material and communicate my understanding back to the instructor in one form or another during the semester. Accommodations will give me equal access and the opportunity to achieve this outcome.

### INFORMATION

Student's rights and responsibilities:

U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights web site

<http://www.ed.gov/ocr/transition.html>

## What are the ADA/DSS Coordinator's Responsibilities?

The DSS coordinator located at the Carson City campus processes all requests for disability services and accommodations for all WNC campus sites. The DSS coordinator is responsible for arranging and coordinating academic accommodations for satellite campuses and rural locations. The DSS coordinator meets with each student who applies for academic accommodations. She evaluates the documentation presented to determine eligibility, verify the disability and the need for equal access, and then provides a Notification of Accommodation specific to the student's needs for each enrolled course.

All disability-related information is kept confidential. The student will be asked to sign a Consent and Release form so that the DSS coordinator can discuss the student's education with other professionals who have a legitimate need to know.

The DSS coordinator determines appropriate accommodations and coordination of services based on current academic standards and requirements to ensure and uphold academic integrity.

# POLICIES & PROCEDURES

## **1. Academic Accommodations:**

Students who wish to request accommodations on the basis of their disability must initiate that request with the WNC DSS coordinator. While later correspondence may be conducted by phone or e-mail, initial requests for accommodation(s) must be made in person. Such requests should be made as early as possible before the semester begins to insure that the appropriate documentation is submitted and that necessary arrangements can be made in a timely manner.

### **A. Testing:**

1. Testing accommodations include but are not limited to readers, scribes, enlarged texts, extended times, and quiet environments. All accommodations are assigned on an individual basis when documentation is presented. All exams will be proctored.
2. Students granted testing accommodations must present the Notification of Accommodation form to their instructor at the start of each semester. When a test is scheduled for a class, the student must schedule a time for the exam with the DSS coordinator.
3. Exams are administered Monday through Friday in the Counseling Services office on the Carson City campus, the tutoring center/library on the Fallon campus, and on a case-by-case basis at the Douglas campus. The student is responsible for taking the test at the scheduled time. If the student misses a test, the student must reschedule the test upon approval from the instructor. If the student misses the test due to his or her disability, the student must provide documentation relating to the absence to the DSS coordinator who will consult with the instructor to reschedule the test.
4. If a scheduling conflict occurs, it is the student's responsibility to contact the DSS coordinator to make alternate arrangements prior to the scheduled test.

### **B. Sign Language Interpretation:**

1. A student who desires an interpreter must request this service through the DSS coordinator *at least two weeks prior to the start of each semester.*
2. Any change in the student's schedule (including withdrawals) must be provided to the DSS coordinator immediately.
3. If the student is unable to attend class, the student must notify the DSS coordinator in advance of the absence. If the student fails to show up for class, the interpreter will notify the DSS coordinator of the unexcused absence. After one unexcused absence from class, use of the interpreter may be temporarily suspended. Prior to reinstatement, the student must meet with the DSS coordinator to discuss his/her responsibilities relative to class attendance and notice of any unexpected absences.

### **C. Equipment Loans:**

1. Tape recorders and assistive listening devices are available for loan to students that qualify for student use as a class room accommodation. Students are required to complete the Equipment Loan Agreement.
2. All equipment must be returned to the DSS coordinator when a class is dropped or at the end of the semester. If equipment is not returned, a hold will be placed on the student's registration and transcript. If the equipment is damaged, the student will have the opportunity to explain the damage to the DSS coordinator when the equipment is returned.
3. While the equipment is in his/her care, the student is responsible for all repairs needed if the equipment is damaged. The student will be billed for the cost of all repairs done by a service center authorized by WNC.

### **D. Texts in Alternate Format (CD, Enlarged, Braille)**

1. The student must contact the DSS coordinator, provide a copy of his/her schedule, and complete the "Alternate Test Request" form. Also, the student should submit a copy of his/her course syllabus as soon as it is available to facilitate the alterations of the texts in the order of which they will be needed. Students needing assignments or handouts altered should submit their requests with seven days notice.
2. The student must obtain the textbooks and submit them to the DSS office as far in advance as possible. A minimum of seven days notice is required for any individual assignment. DSS will notify the student when the texts have been altered.
3. Textbooks will be returned to the student when the text alterations have been completed. In exchange, the student must return all altered materials at the end of each semester.
4. If a student fails to return the altered materials at the end of each semester, a hold may be placed on the student's registration or transcript.
5. Once a request is made to the DSS office, the coordinator will contact Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic to determine if that particular text is available on CD. If it is not available through this service, the DSS coordinator will contact the publisher requesting the alternate format. If either source is not available, students are advised that texts are read onto tape/CD by computer-assisted programs, volunteers, student workers, and other readers without the availability of a professional recording studio.

### **E. Note Takers**

Based on the functional impact of a student's disability, a note taker may be necessary. In most cases, the DSS coordinator will arrange for a peer (student currently enrolled in same course) to share a copy of lecture notes with student after class. Additionally, the DSS office hires hourly note takers when a peer can not be identified.

### **F. Peer Mentors**

The DSS coordinator sponsors a project supporting peer mentoring services for students registered with the DSS office. Peer mentors are available to support students who have questions regarding academics, organizational skills, time management, etc. Peer mentors are available to meet with students individually and in small groups.

### **G. Other Accommodations**

Other accommodations may be assigned on a case-by-case basis and procedures for receiving those accommodations will be arranged with the student. If a student provides a valid Notification of Accommodation form to an instructor but finds that the accommodations are not provided in the agreed upon manner, it is the student's responsibility to notify the DSS coordinator immediately. WNC, with its faculty and staff, will take the necessary steps to assure the integrity of the accommodation process, but it is the student's responsibility to initiate such an investigation/action if problems arise, by informing the DSS coordinator in writing.

## **2. Grievances:**

If equal access is denied or believed to be denied, the student must inform the DSS office in writing about his/her concern or problem immediately. The DSS coordinator will investigate the allegation to determine if equal access was denied, and will serve as the student's advocate to resolve the problem/situation.

If resolution cannot be reached, the student should follow the WNC Student Grievance Procedure in the WNC online catalog, under the heading of Rules and Sanctions. A grievance must be filed in writing to the appropriate dean within 30 instructional days of the alleged infraction. Formal grievance procedures are initiated only after informal attempts have been found unsatisfactory in reaching a just solution.

Members of a grievance committee will be selected by the appropriate dean. The student and involved parties will be given the opportunity to present their cases in a formal hearing to the selected grievance committee. The committee will then recommend a course of action to the vice president for Academic and Student Affairs.

The student will receive written notification of the final decision from the vice president for Academic and Student Affairs.

### **3. Confidentiality:**

WNC recognizes that information regarding a disability is highly confidential in nature. WNC establishes the following guidelines regarding the management of disability-related documentation and information in keeping with our respect for the privacy of persons with disabilities after having reviewed relevant federal and state statutes.

The DSS office will have the responsibility of holding documentation of disability presented by students in support of their eligibility for protection/service under the law. Such files will be considered highly confidential and shall be protected appropriately.

Students with disabilities have a right to access the information in their files with the exception of information sent directly from an outside professional for the purposes of providing documentation of a disability and which is specifically marked as “not to be shared.” Students may request that the disability coordinator help in explaining relevant information from those files to other members of the campus community.

Information regarding a student’s disability status/documentation will be shared on a need-to-know basis only within the campus community. In this context, a “need-to-know” is defined as having a need for such information because there is action needed on the part of the individual in response to that information.

Every effort will be made to see that detailed information regarding a student’s disability is not left in open files or where it might be seen by accident.

### **4. High School Students:**

WNC accepts the responsibility for providing academic accommodations to disabled high school students who are enrolled in college course work at WNC for dual credit or through the Fast Track program. These students must meet with the DSS coordinator to establish a file as a student with a documented disability. Students under age 18 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian to establish a file.

## **5. Full-time Enrollment Equivalency: (See College Policy # 3-3-8)**

All students with disabilities are eligible to apply for full-time enrollment equivalency status, which, if approved, allows them to take a reduced course load while maintaining full-time status (no less than six credits.) The approval of a reduced course load with full-time status is not permanent status; students are not automatically eligible for this accommodation each semester. The request must be submitted and evaluated each semester to determine the impact of the student's disability in terms of the demands of his/her proposed course schedule.

1. Requests for full-time enrollment equivalency are to be submitted to the DSS coordinator along with supporting documentation. Documentation must include a diagnostic evaluation from an appropriate professional (i.e., medical doctor, psychiatrist, psychologist, audiologist, physiatrist, or other qualified professional,) which is recent enough (no more than three to five years for learning disabilities, three years for ADHD, and six months for psychiatric/psychological disorders) to evaluate the current impact of the disability.
2. The DSS coordinator evaluates the documentation and the request in terms of the impact of the disability and the demands of the student's current or proposed schedule, and any recommendations or concerns on the part of any department.
3. If the request is denied, the student may appeal the coordinator's decision through the standard accommodation grievance procedures.
4. If approved, the DSS coordinator will submit a recommendation for full-time enrollment equivalency along with complete documentation to the dean of Student Services for final action.
5. Students awarded full-time enrollment equivalencies who have been awarded a scholarship may continue to receive funding with the approval of the donor.
6. Approval of full-time enrollment equivalency may result in an adjusted federal financial aid package in accordance with regulations. If aid has been disbursed prior to the reduced course load approval, consultation between the DSS coordinator and the director of Financial Assistance will determine whether a credit deficiency exists.
7. A decision to allow a student to be designated full-time with less than the standard full-time load shall allow the student all benefits and privileges assigned to full-time students at the college, including but not limited to, eligibility for Dean's List, participation in extracurricular activities, athletics (subject to approval of NJCAA), and verification of student status for insurance purposes.

## **6. Personal Care Attendants: (See College Policy #13-2-1)**

A Personal Care Attendant is defined as an individual who attends to the physical needs of people who are disabled or otherwise unable to take care of themselves, including tasks such as bathing, management of bodily functions, and cooking.

### **Responsibility of the College**

It is the responsibility of Western Nevada College administration, faculty, and staff to provide academic or program access accommodations for a student with physical/medical impairments. Reasonable accommodations will be provided to address the student's disability within the classroom and in service areas of the college. Accommodations are determined through the Disability Support Services office.

Appropriate accommodations, for example, may include providing a note-taker for class lectures, a scribe to record responses or complete forms, provision of adaptive equipment within the classroom or lab setting, assuring building and college accessibility, or any other type of reasonable assistance that will allow the student equal access to the college and its programs.

It is not the responsibility of the college to provide services to meet the student's personal needs (actions needed regardless of whether the person is a student). Example of those services may include, but are not limited to, transfer from a car/van to a wheelchair; transportation to or from the classroom; administering medication; and addressing toilet, feeding, or dressing needs.

### **Responsibility of the Student**

Personal Care Attendants may be required to address the personal needs of the student thus allowing him/her to participate in college. It is the student's responsibility to have the PCA register with the DSS office prior to any college-related activities, i.e., placement testing, enrollment, and class attendance. The college is not responsible for providing PCA services on an interim basis. The DSS office does not participate in the PCA interviewing or hiring process.

While at WNC, it is the enrolled student's responsibility for the activities of the PCA. The PCA must abide by WNC's student code of conduct. PCAs will not be allowed to proctor tests. PCAs may assist the student before or after classes but must wait outside the classroom while it is in session, unless given permission by the DSS coordinator to do otherwise. If the student requests that the PCA provide note-taking services, the college cannot pay the PCA a note-taker stipend.

## **7. Service Animals: (See College Policy #13-2-2)**

According to federal disability laws, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act, a service animal is defined as “any animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including, but not limited to, guiding individuals with impaired vision, alerting individuals to an impending seizure or protecting individuals during one, alerting individuals who are hearing impaired to intruders, or pulling a wheelchair and fetching dropped items.”

Service animals will be permitted to accompany a person with a disability everywhere on campus or off campus as the activity (e.g. internship, field work, etc.) pertains to the curriculum. If there are any questions as to whether an animal qualifies as a service animal, a determination will be made by the Disability Support Services coordinator.

In compliance with the ADA, service animals are welcome in all buildings on campus and may attend any class, meeting or other co-curricular event. Students with disabilities desiring to use a service animal on campus should first contact DSS to register as a student with a disability. The DSS coordinator will evaluate the disability and recommend any additional accommodations appropriate to the functional limitations of the disability based on the documentation received.

### **Requirements of service animals and their owners include:**

- 1. Vaccination:** The animal must be immunized against diseases common to that type of animal. Owners of dogs must provide proof of current rabies vaccine to the DSS coordinator.
- 2. Licensing:** Dogs must be licensed in accordance with county regulations.
- 3. Health:** The animal must be in good health. Service animals that are ill should not be taken into public areas. A partner with an ill animal may be asked to leave the college facilities.
- 4. Leash:** The service animal must be on a leash at all times.
- 5. Under Control of the Owner:** The owner must be in full control of the animal at all times. The care and supervision of a service animal is solely the responsibility of its owner.
- 6. Cleanup:** The owner must clean up after the animal. Individuals with disabilities who physically cannot clean up after their own service animals may not be required to. However, the individual is required to notify DSS so that other accommodations can be made.  
Reasonable behavior is expected from service animals while at the college. If a service dog, for example, exhibits unacceptable behavior, the owner is expected to employ the proper training techniques to correct the situation.  
The owners of disruptive or aggressive service animals may be asked to remove them from the college’s facilities. If the improper behavior happens repeatedly, the owner may be told not to bring the service animal into the facility until they take significant steps to mitigate the behavior, such as muzzling a barking dog, or refresher training for the animal and its owner. Proof of these mitigating efforts will be provided to the DSS coordinator before the animal will be allowed back on campus.

Cleanliness of the service animal is mandatory. Consideration of others must be taken into account when providing maintenance and hygiene of a service animal. For instance, daily grooming and occasional baths should keep dog odor to a minimum, and adequate preventative measures should be taken for flea control. If another student or instructor in a classroom has an allergy to a service animal, the DSS coordinator should be notified immediately to resolve the situation.

**Areas Off Limits to Service Animals and Areas Where There is a Danger to the Service Animal:** Any room, including a classroom, where there are sharp metal cuttings or other sharp objects on the floor or protruding from a surface; where there is hot material on the floor; where there is a high level of dust; or where there is moving machinery, is off limits to service animals. (e.g., mechanical rooms, custodial closets, welding shops, and metal/machine shops).

Instructors may make exceptions on a case-by-case basis. The final decision shall be made based on the nature of research or machinery and on the best interest of the animal. WNC is a willing supporter of service animals in training.

# GUIDELINES FOR DOCUMENTING DISABILITIES

To fully evaluate requests for accommodations, WNC requires documentation of the disability that includes an evaluation by an appropriate professional describing the current impact of the disability as it relates to a request for academic accommodation. It is the student's responsibility to provide the appropriate documentation of the disability.

All contact information and documentation received is kept in separate, confidential files within the DSS office. Information concerning accommodations or the documentation provided is not be released without the student's signature on the Consent and Release form.

Documentation provided is used by the DSS coordinator to evaluate requests for accommodations. The evaluation process includes a review of the documentation itself and, in the context of documentation, the fundamental goals and essential standards of the program, course, service, or benefit in question. The evaluation process generates a list of potentially reasonable accommodations that is reviewed based on probable effectiveness, preferences of the requester, maximum level of integration, and the potential for an undue financial or administrative burden.

The following documentation guidelines were developed to assist students who are working with treating professional(s) to prepare evaluations required to document a disability. These guidelines are only guidelines; the information identified is not exhaustive, and in some cases it may be necessary for a student to provide additional or more current information. Anyone with questions after reading these guidelines is asked to call or e-mail the DSS coordinator.

## **For Individuals Who Have Recently Been Receiving Services From a Public School System:**

The information required may be contained in the Psycho-Educational Evaluation of the most recent assessment/evaluation review. Some of the information may also be contained in an IEP, 504 Plan, or Transition Plan. This information must be requested separately from high school transcripts.

## **For Individuals Who Are or Have Been Recently Receiving Services From a State Rehabilitation Agency:**

Much of the required information will be contained in the most recent eligibility evaluation and/or vocational plan.

## **For Individuals Transferring From Another College:**

Information related to student disability will not be sent with a transcript request, and must be requested separately.

Additionally, the information WNC requires may or may not have been a part of the evaluation process at a previous public school system, state rehabilitation agency or college. Check the information against the guidelines on the next page.

### **All Documentation Must Include:**

#### **1. A diagnostic statement identifying the disability, date of current diagnostic evaluation, and the date of the original diagnosis.**

Under federal law, a “disability” is a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. (These terms are defined in considerable detail in the applicable public laws; DSS can provide additional information.)

The recommended diagnostic taxonomies are the diagnostic systems used by the Department of Education, the State Department of Rehabilitation Services or other state agencies and/or the current editions of either the Diagnostic Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association or the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems of the World Health Organization.

#### **2. Documentation needs to be current:**

- A. No more than five years old for learning disabilities
- B. No more than three years old for attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder
- C. No more than six months to one year old for psychological or psychiatric disorders.

#### **3. A description of the diagnostic criteria and/or diagnostic test(s):**

This description should include the specific results of diagnostic procedures, diagnostic tests utilized, and when administered. When available, both summary and specific test scores should be reported. When standard scores are not available, the mean, standard deviation, and the standard error of measurement are requested as appropriate to the construction of the test(s).

Diagnostic methods used should be congruent with the disability and current professional practices within the field. Informal or non-standardized evaluations should be described in enough detail that a professional colleague could understand their role and significance in the diagnostic process.

**4. A description of the current functional impact of the disability:**

The current functional impact on physical, perceptual, cognitive, and behavioral abilities should be described either explicitly or through the provision of specific results from the diagnostic procedures. Information is considered to be current when it provides a clear picture of the individual's function at the present time. It is less a matter of months/years since the last evaluation than a determining of whether the information provided can be used to be predictive in assigning appropriate accommodations. Currency will be evaluated based on the typical progression of the specific disability, its interaction with development across the life span, the presence or absence of significant events since the date of the evaluation that would impact functioning, and the applicability of the information to the current context of the request for accommodations.

**5. Treatments, medications, adaptive devices, and assistive services currently prescribed or in use:**

The professional evaluation needs to include a description of treatments, medications, adaptive devices, assistive services, and accommodations in current use, as well as their estimated effectiveness to ameliorate the impact of the disability. Also noted should be significant side effects of treatment that may impact physical, perceptual, and behavioral or cognitive performances.

**6. A description of the expected progression or stability of disability should be included:**

This description should provide an estimate of the change in the functional limitations of the disability over time and/or recommendations concerning the predictable needs for reevaluation.

**7. The credentials of the diagnosing professional(s):**

The information describing the certification, licensure, and/or the professional training of individuals conducting the evaluation should be provided.