

National–Louis University Policy on Students with Disabilities

AP: 306

Recommended:	Student Academic Standards Committee	Date: May 9, 1999
Approved:	Faculty Senate	Date: June 16, 1999
Approved:	University President	Date: April 13, 2000

EFFECTIVE DATE: April 13, 2000

An Introduction

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law on July 26, 1990. This act protects millions of Americans with disabling conditions from discriminatory practices in public accommodations (including, colleges and universities), employment transportation and telecommunications. The ADA extends the coverage of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Section 504 is designed to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. It provides that no qualified disabled person shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity which receives or benefits from federal financial assistance. National-Louis University supports this philosophy.

According to the ADA, disabled person means any person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such impairment, or is regarded as having such impairment. The ADA protects every person who either has, used to have, or is treated as having, a physical or mental disability which substantially limits one or more major life activity.

Employment Policy

National-Louis University (NLU), as an employer of students, faculty and staff, will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabling conditions and must reasonably accommodate the disabilities of qualified applicants or employees unless undue hardship would result. The specifics of the employment policy are delineated in the Human Resource policies.

Public Services Access and Accommodation

National-Louis University will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabling conditions by excluding them from participating in or denying them the benefits of the services, programs or activities of the university. Public facilities of NLU,

including student common areas, auditoriums, libraries, athletic/recreational facilities, etc., must be accessible to individuals with disabling conditions. The specifics of the institutional policies related to Public Services Access and Accommodation are delineated in other institutional policies.

Policy on Students with Disabilities

Preface

National-Louis University, with this policy statement, asserts its commitment to students with disabilities. Underlying this policy, which is of necessity written in legalistic and prescriptive terms, is a firm belief in the value that the University places on students with disabilities. The faculty and administration believe that such students have a contribution to make to the University community and to society.

The University faculty and administration recognize that students with disabilities have often been prevented from achieving their potential. This policy will ensure that this does not happen at National-Louis University. It is intended that National-Louis University be an institution that welcomes, supports, values, and enhances the education of students with disabilities.

I. Rights and Responsibilities

A. University Rights and Responsibilities

The rights and responsibilities of National-Louis University administrators, academic administrators, and the faculty relate to implementing criteria for the assessment, placement and accommodation of applicants and students with a disability.

1. National Louis University, through the Office of the Provost and Chief Academic Officer, has an obligation (right) to maintain the integrity of its academic programs and to fairly and consistently uphold academic standards. The University understands its obligation (responsibility) to provide reasonable accommodations and academic adjustments and to provide applicants and students with a disability the opportunity to succeed. To meet its commitment to provide access to academic programs and courses, the University acknowledges its rights and responsibilities by articulating specific procedures herein to ensure that a consistent academic decision making process is followed in the admissions process and where appropriate, in the selection of reasonable accommodation. The University has an obligation to:
 - a. Ensure that University courses, programs, services, jobs, activities, and facilities, when viewed in their entirety, are offered in the most integrated and appropriate settings.
 - b. Provide information regarding policies and procedures to students with disabilities and assure its availability in accessible formats upon request.

- c. Evaluate students on their abilities, not their disabilities.
- d. Provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations, academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids for students with disabilities in response to timely requests by applicants and students.
- e. Maintain appropriate confidentiality of records and communication concerning applicants/students with disabilities except where disclosure is required by law or authorized by the applicant/student.

B. Applicant/Student Rights and Responsibilities

The rights and responsibilities of applicants and students with a disability relate to qualification for, admission to, and completion of University programs and course.

1. The University's rights and responsibilities must be understood in the context that otherwise qualified applicants for admission and students with documented disabilities that meet the University's qualifications and essential technical, academic, and institutional standards also have rights. These include the right to:
 - a. Equal access to courses, programs, services, job, activities, and facilities available through the University.
 - b. Reasonable and appropriate accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids determined on a case-by-case basis.
 - c. Appropriate confidentiality of all medical or psychoeducational information pertaining to his/her disability with the choice of whom to disclose their disability to except as required by law. (Access to information within the University is limited to those persons involved in the admission/accommodation decisions as provided for herein.)
 - d. Access to admissions and academic information, which is reasonably available in accessible formats.
2. The University is fully committed to ensure that every otherwise qualified applicant for admission and student with a documented disability that meet the University's qualifications and the essential technical, academic, and institutional standards are afforded the opportunity for admission and are afforded the opportunity to succeed in University programs and courses. In support of that commitment, applicants and students with documented disabilities must recognize that they have a responsibility to:
 - a. Identify themselves in a timely manner (within the first two weeks of class) as an individual with a disability when seeking an accommodation.
 - b. Provide medical or psychoeducational documentation from an appropriate professional source that verifies the nature of the disability, functional limitations, and the need for specific accommodations.
 - c. Follow specific procedures outlined herein for obtaining reasonable and

appropriate accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids.

II. Admissions and Recruitment Procedure

A. The Recruitment and Admissions Process

1. Qualified persons with a disability may not, on the basis of disability, be denied admission or be subjected to discrimination in admission or recruitment.
2. It is illegal for any university to make pre-admission inquiries about a student's disability.
3. National-Louis University personnel may not make pre-admission inquiries as to whether an applicant for admission is a disabled person.
4. Ensure that all applicants who are denied admission are provided with an opportunity to appeal the decision through the appropriate academic appeals policy. (The Policy of Academic Appeals is found in the Student Guidebook and the Faculty Handbook.) If an applicant feels he/she has been denied admission because based on a disability, the individual may file a discrimination charge with the Director of Diversity, Access and Equity or if the charge is against the Director of Diversity, Access and Equity, the individual may file a charge with the Office of the Provost and Chief Academic Officer.
5. Included in the University Admissions Packet will be a statement (see attachment) that outlines for the student the opportunity to self-identify *after admission to NLU* and requests accommodations as needed to assist with his or her matriculation as a member of the NLU community.
6. Any medical or psychoeducational documentation provided is confidential and cannot be released to anyone without the applicant/student's permission.
7. Once a student asks for special accommodations (self-identifies), the student must be referred to the Director of Diversity, Access and Equity, or appropriate Student Disability Representative who will implement this policy.

B. Post-Admissions Accommodation Process

1. Director of Diversity, Access and Equity

Part of the responsibility of the person who is Director of Diversity, Access and Equity, Access & Equity is to serve as the University's Student Disabilities Coordinator. The Director of Diversity, Access and Equity is directly responsible to the Provost and Chief Academic Officer, the Senior Vice President for Administration and to the President in these matters. The Director of Diversity, Access and Equity's representative at out-of-state campuses will coordinate activities through the Director of Diversity, Access and Equity. Generally, the Student Disability Representatives at out-of-state campuses will be the Center for Academic Development's Academic Accommodations Coordinators (AAC). The Director of Diversity, Access

and Equity or the Student Disability Representative (SDR) who generally is the Center for Academic Development's Academic Accommodations Coordinator (AAC) will:

- a. Implement this procedure in response to an individual who has self-identified as having a disability, the request of a faculty member and/or the request of an academic administrator.
- b. Request current medical or psychoeducational documentation from the applicant/student that was completed by an appropriate professional source to verify the need for reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids. A student may use his/her most current reputable evaluation if it is not older than three years.
- c. In the event that the student does not have current medical or psychoeducational documentation, or the documentation is not sufficient, advise the student on methods for obtaining appropriate documentation of his/her disability.
- d. In the event that the student has submitted documentation of a psychological, psychoeducational, or neuropsychological nature, provide the ACC, or SDR, with the medical or psychoeducational documentation for assessment (the AAC's responsibilities are outlined in the next section). The AAC will, in turn, when warranted, consult with the academic department/program administrator and other appropriate individuals (e.g., Special Education, Educational Psychology, Office for Student Affairs and/or a facilities person) to develop a consensus as to an appropriate disposition/ accommodation. If the DSR has been the designate person for the consultation, he/she will advise the Director of Diversity, Access and Equity of the result of that consultation.
- e. In the event that physical adjustment(s) and or auxiliary aid(s) are required for a physical disability, review the request for accommodation, the medical documentation, the university's ability to accommodate and make an appropriate decision regarding an accommodation (in some situations, it may be appropriate to consult with the program administrator, Office for Student Affairs or persons responsible for facilities prior to making a decision).
- f. When the Director of Diversity, Access and Equity has made his/her final decision regarding a reasonable accommodation, the Director of Diversity, Access and Equity will:
 - 1) Advise the student of the decision.
 - 2) If a student requests to meet with the Director of Diversity, Access and Equity/ DSR/AAC if dissatisfied with the decision, attempt to obtain student agreement as to the accommodation (this may necessitate a meeting with the DSR/AAC and/or the academic department/ program administrator.
 - 3) Inform students with disabilities of University policies and procedures for filing a formal grievance through the Office of the Director of Diversity, Access and Equity or by initiating an appeal to the Office of

- Academic Affairs if the grievance is against the Director of Diversity, Access and Equity.
- g. Ensure that the admitted student with a disability receives the appropriate accommodation.
 - h. Assure confidentiality of all information pertaining to a student's disability.
3. In collaboration with the Director of Diversity, Access and Equity, the Academic Accommodations Coordinator (AAC) will:
- a. Review the student's psychological, psychoeducational, or neuropsychological documentation received from the Director of Diversity, Access and Equity. Ensure that the documentation was completed by an appropriate professional source articulating the need for reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids. Verify the applicant/student's need for reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids with the professional source of his/her documentation with the student's signed consent authorizing such discussion.
 - b. Determine eligibility for participation of student with disability in the academic accommodation process based upon review of appropriate medical or psychoeducational documentation.
 - c. In the event that the student does not have current documentation, or the documentation is not sufficient, advise the student on methods for obtaining appropriate documentation of their disability.
 - d. Recommend denial of request for accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids if the documentation does not identify a specific disability, the documentation fails to verify the need for the requested services, or the documentation is not provided in a timely manner. Recommend denial to the Director of Diversity, Access and Equity.
 - e. Consult when warranted with the academic department/program administrator and other appropriate individuals (e.g., Special Education, Educational Psychology, Office of Student Affairs and/or a facilities person), individually or as a group, to develop a consensus as to an appropriate disposition. The number of individuals consulted will be limited due to privacy concerns. The AAC and the consultants will:
 - 1) Review AAC's input regarding the documentation outlining the need for accommodation. This consultation will not involve the copying or sharing of the student's documentation – the AAC will recommend/suggest appropriate accommodations, academic adjustments, and /or auxiliary aids based on that documentation and the student's request.
 - 2) Review medical or psychoeducational documentation received that was completed by an appropriate professional source articulating the need for reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids.

- 3) Select the appropriate accommodation(s), adjustment(s), and/or auxiliary aid(s) based upon professional input, the student's request and institutional/program considerations. In the event that physical adjustment(s) and or auxiliary aid(s) are required for a physical disability, the Director of Diversity, Access and Equity will contact the AAC and/or the Office of Student Affairs for assistance.
- 4) Decline to provide an accommodation, adjustment, and/or auxiliary aids that is inappropriate or unreasonable including any that:
 - a) Pose a direct threat to the health and safety of others; or
 - b) Constitute a substantial change or alteration to an essential element of a course, curriculum or program.
- f. Advise the Director of Diversity, Access and Equity of the results of the review.

III. Admitted or Returning Students with Disabilities

A. Current Student:

1. Provide the Director of Diversity, Access and Equity/Academic Development's Academic Accommodations Coordinator (AAC), generally acting in the capacity of Student Disability Representative (out-of-state campuses), with appropriate medical, psychological, psychoeducational, or neuropsychological documentation indicating the student's disability and suggested accommodation.
2. Provide a signed consent authorizing the Director of Diversity, Access and Equity/AAC/ Student Affairs to discuss his/her need for reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids with the professional source of his/her medical or psychoeducational documentation.
3. Meet with the AAC to discuss the admissions decision and to determine if an appropriate reasonable accommodation can be made, and to provide input on appropriate academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids.
4. Students enrolled in the four-term academic year system will contact the Director of Diversity, Access and Equity or the AAC/ Student Disability Representative (out-of-state campuses) at the beginning of each term so that appropriate accommodations can be made in a timely manner. Students shall make this contact no later than second week of each term. This includes filling out the required academic accommodation letter that indicates the student needs (e.g., extended time to complete exams, notetaker, classroom relocation, laboratory assistant, etc.).
5. Students enrolled in sequenced field or clustered programs will contact the Director of Diversity, Access and Equity or the AAC/Student Disability Representative (out-of-state campuses) at the beginning of the first term so that appropriate accommodations can be made in a timely manner. This includes filling out the required academic accommodation form that indicates the student needs (e.g., extended time to complete exams, notetakers, classroom relocation, laboratory assistant, etc.). Students are strongly

encouraged to contact their next course instructor two weeks before each new course to ensure that proper accommodations may be coordinated with the AAC/SDR and the faculty member.

6. Inform the faculty member via discussion with a letter to follow that has generally been developed between the student and the AAC/SDR and perhaps with input from the faculty member when appropriate prior to the beginning or within the first two weeks of each course about his/her disability, how performance may be affected, and necessary and reasonable accommodation(s).
7. Meet the timelines and procedural requirements established by the Director of Diversity, Access and Equity or the AAC/Student Disability Representative and coordinated with the faculty member, for scheduling exams, requesting assistance, arranging with a faculty member for getting the exam to a location of testing. If the student fails to provide adequate notice of the need for space and/or assistance, he/she is still entitled to the accommodation, but there is no guarantee that it can be provided in the fullest measure.
8. If the student fails to comply with these requirements, he/she will receive a written reminder of responsibilities in order to stress the importance of these requirements.

B. Returning Student

1. A student with a disability who left the University in good academic standing and applies for readmission within three academic years, may be readmitted based on the previously submitted documentation or may submit updated material if they wish to modify a previously agreed upon accommodation.
2. A student with a disability who left the University in good academic standing and applies for readmission more than three academic years after leaving, must submit new or updated documentation and go through the same process with the Director of Diversity, Access and Equity or Student Disability Coordinator Representative and the AAC as they did after their initial university admission.
3. A student with a disability who has been dropped from a program for academic reasons may apply for readmission in accordance with the current University Catalog requirements for readmission. The University Graduate and Undergraduate Directors of Admissions may consult with the Director of Diversity, Access and Equity or local Student Disability Coordinator/Representative (out-of-state campuses) for input.

IV. The Faculty Responsibilities

A faculty member should not make an accommodation on his or her own initiative; the Director of Diversity, Access and Equity or AAC/Student Disability Representative has access to resources within the University which will ensure that the appropriate accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids are made available on a case-by-case basis.

- A. To ensure that admitted students with disabilities have the greatest opportunity for success in their courses, faculty members have the responsibility to comply with the following:
1. Provide appropriate accommodations as specified by the Director of Diversity, Access and Equity or local Student Disability Representative.
 2. Once an admission decision is made (a student is enrolled in a course), on a confidential basis, discuss a demonstrated need of assistance with a student and may suggest that the student seek assistance with the Center for Academic Development. Or, If a student who has not previously self-identified wishes to declare a disability, the faculty member must direct the student to the Director of Diversity, Access and Equity or local Student Disability Representative.
 3. Discuss any concerns related to accommodation(s) or arrangements that have been requested by the student with the Director of Diversity, Access and Equity or local Student Disability Representative and the academic department director/administrator when warranted.
 4. Discuss academic issues related to meeting course objectives with the academic department head or program administrator/director when warranted to include methods for ensuring that the student meets those objectives within the criteria set by the agreed upon accommodation(s).
 5. Provide appropriate accommodations, either personally or by making arrangements with the Academic Accommodations Coordinator, Director of Diversity, Access and Equity, Office of Student Affairs or academic department head or program director when warranted.
 6. Assure the timely delivery of an examination or other graded assignment, along with all necessary instructions and materials for proper administration, if an examination or assignment is to be administered outside of class. The faculty member may also make arrangements with the student for the delivery and return of the examination or assignment.
 7. Maintain a safe and secure environment for all students regardless of status with particular emphasis on emergency egress.
 8. Assure the confidentiality of information regarding students with disabilities.

V. Academic Adjustments/Accommodations

- A. National-Louis University shall make such modifications to academic requirements as are necessary to ensure that such requirements do not discriminate or have the effect of discriminating, on the basis of disability, against a qualified disabled applicant or student. Academic requirements that are essential to the program of instruction being pursued by such student or to any directly related licensing requirement, will not be regarded as discriminatory within the meaning of this section.

- B. Modifications may include changes in the length of time permitted for the completion of degree requirements and adaptation of the manner in which specific courses are conducted. The university shall take such steps as are necessary to ensure that no disabled student is denied the benefits of, excluded from participation in, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under the education program or activity operated by the university because of the absence of educational auxiliary aids for students with impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills.
- C. Faculty Guide In Assisting Students With Disabilities, 1999, published by Andreen A. Neukranz-Butler, Director of Diversity, Access and Equity at National-Louis University is available to all students, faculty and staff.