

## Arranging for Accommodations

New Mexico Tech's Office of Counseling and Disability Services (OCDS) makes every effort to ensure that appropriate and reasonable accommodations are provided to students with documented disabilities, which substantially limit one or more major life activities. Accommodations will be provided to students with disabilities to enable students to meet institutional standards without compromising the Academic Integrity of the course, program, assignment or activity.

Below are the guidelines for accommodations to ensure equal access to opportunity, as a student with a documented disability. A student is an incoming freshman with a signed acceptance letter or anyone registered for classes with New Mexico Tech (NMT). Request for accommodation may take up to four weeks for approval or denial. Meeting with the Office of Counseling and Disability as soon as possible before the start of the semester is recommended.

- 1) **Student completes the NMT Request for accommodation form.**  
[http://www.nmt.edu/images/stories/counseling\\_disabilities/Student Request for Disability Services Form.pdf](http://www.nmt.edu/images/stories/counseling_disabilities/Student_Request_for_Disability_Services_Form.pdf)
- 2) **Student submits documentation of a disability to verify eligibility under the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the New Mexico Tech's Guidelines for Documentation of Students with Disabilities. (insert hyperlink) ADAAA defines a disability as a substantial limitation of a major life function. The diagnostic report must document a disability.**
- 3) **Student sets an intake meeting with Disability staff after documentation is received and the request for accommodation form is completed. Student may set appointment via email, phone or in person.**
  - a. **Paperwork for first meeting**
    - i. **NMT Request for Disability Services form – completed**
    - ii. **Documentation – received in office at least 48 hours prior to intake meeting.**
    - iii. **Class schedule for current semester, including credit hours, course number, instructor, class room, days and times. The syllabi for classes if they are available.**
- 4) **The student and the Disability Staff will meet, for no more than one hour, for initial discussion of reasonable accommodations, to ensure equal access to opportunity. The staff verifies the disability and determines how the disability affects academic performance. This is accomplished through discussion with the student and a review of the documentation. It is important to recognize that academic adjustment needs can change over time and are not always identified through the initial diagnostic process. Conversely, a prior history of accommodation, without demonstration of current need, does not in and of itself warrant the provision of a like accommodation.**

## **Disability Evaluations**

If you suspect that you may have a disability and need accommodations for your academics at New Mexico Tech, below are some important details. For complete details regarding documentation requirements refer to New Mexico Tech’s Guidelines for Documentation of Students with Disabilities.

### **Students with Learning Disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, and Traumatic/Acquired Brain Injury**

A copy of the comprehensive psycho educational report must be provided to the OCDS at NMT in order for the student to be eligible for accommodations and/or modifications. Documentation should include testing scores and a verifying statement from a school psychologist, clinical psychologist, neuropsychologist, or other qualified professional. This group of students comprises the largest population of students served by OCDS. Learning disabilities affect the manner in which individuals acquire, integrate, and/or express knowledge. Learning disabilities may affect a student’s performance in reading, writing, spoken language, mathematics, or orientation to space and time.

### **Students with Visual, Hearing, Physical, and Chronic Medical Condition Disabilities**

OCDS requires medical records for students with visual and/or hearing disabilities and, in particular instances, may accept verification of disabilities from the Department of Human Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DHS/DVR). Documentation must include narrative explanation for clarification and may include an audiogram and/or optometric results. Documentation must include specific restrictions due to a physical disability and potential accommodations required.

#### **Visual Disabilities**

Visual disabilities may vary from total blindness to low vision. Students with visual disabilities may experience eyestrain, light sensitivity, and an inability to read printed material or to distinguish certain colors. Students who have been blind from birth have no visual memories. Their concepts of objects, space, and distance may be different from those persons who develop visual disabilities later in life. Mobility and orientation skills also vary due to numerous factors. Students with low vision may not have an apparent “visible” disability. Students may experience difficulty in performing in class readings, unannounced quizzes, open book tests, locating lecture information, completing scantron answer sheets, or viewing lecture notes.

#### **Deaf and Hard of Hearing**

The age of onset of a hearing disability will have a great impact upon the student’s English ability, both spoken and written. Generally, English is considered a second language for deaf and hard of hearing students when signed languages are the dominant mode of communication. Appropriate requests include use of a Signed Language interpreter, real-time captioning, note taking, providing all directions in writing, and closed captioned videos.

#### **Physical Disabilities**

Physical access is one of the major concerns for students with physical disabilities. Students may encounter unavoidable delays during inclement weather, heavy foot traffic times, and periods of construction. If a classroom is inaccessible, OCDS will work with the department to relocate the class to an accessible location.

### **Chronic Health Conditions**

There are a number of chronic health conditions that may interfere with a student's academic work, concentration, and attendance. Some students may be in pain, or taking medication with varying side effects such as drowsiness. Students with seizure disorders may be affected at any time, without warning. Some medication can lessen or control seizures, but produce side effects such as slowed response and impaired coordination. Such medication makes it unlikely a seizure will occur in class. Faculty should contact emergency personnel when seizures occur.

### **Students with Psychological Disabilities**

OCDS requires a letter from a clinical psychologist, psychiatrist, or DHS/DVR. Documentation may include diagnostic treatment information, and potential medication side effects. Psychological disabilities include, but are not limited to, depression, bipolar disorder (or manic depressive disorder), anxiety disorders, and schizophrenia. Determination of eligibility for services is based on severity, duration, and onset of the disorder. On rare occasions, classroom behavior may become an issue. All students are expected to maintain appropriate behavior. Some students undergoing treatment take prescription medication to help control symptoms. This medication may have side effects such as drowsiness or disorientation.

### **Evaluative Documentation**

Students are required to provide documentation of a disability as the first step in the initiation of services. Those students with no documentation and suspecting they may have a disability may seek an evaluation from community diagnosticians or health care providers. The cost of the evaluation is the responsibility of the student. Students should check with their health insurance to see if any of the cost is covered by their health insurance policy.

### **Accommodation Process**

After the disability and its functional limitations are verified, the student is provided information about the various reasonable accommodations that address the student's disability. The student then chooses the reasonable accommodations that best apply in a given course or semester.

1. Students indicate the need for accommodation letters through contact with OCDS each semester. Accommodations letters are not processed without consent from the NMT student.
2. Accommodation letters are printed at the OCDS office. OCDS will let the student know when the letters are ready. The student is responsible for delivering the letters to their faculty. Accommodations do not begin until the faculty is made aware of the accommodations. Any questions regarding impact of accommodation on the integrity of the course should be directed to OCDS, not the student.
3. Faculty are informed of the presence of a sign language interpreter or special accommodations in the classroom prior to the start of the semester when reasonably possible.
4. When faculty/staff have been notified, additional clarification and discussion may occur.