BEMIDJI STATE UNIVERSITY

Policies and Procedures

Disability Services Office

On-Line Coursework

January 2010
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1
SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Bemidji State University Mission Vision and Statement

Vision

Shaping potential, shaping worlds

Mission

E3 Engage, Embrace, Educate

As northern Minnesota’s University, we engage in new worlds of thought, embrace responsible citizenship, and educate for a future that can only be imagined.

1.2 Bemidji State University Disability Services Mission Statement

The mission of the Disability Services Office is to improve the educational development of students with disabilities, enhance understanding and support within the campus community, while providing opportunities for student growth in multicultural understanding, civic engagement and environmental stewardship. Students will be better prepared to enter their communities as contributing and supporting members with an understanding of the diverse needs of those in their community.

1.3 Association on Higher Education and Disabilities Code of Ethics

The Association on Higher Education and Disabilities (AHEAD) is an international, multicultural organization of professionals who serve as a resource to postsecondary education institution’s disability service providers through workshops, conferences, publications and other types of information to aid service providers in their delivery of accommodations. This Code of Ethics was adopted as a guiding principle for the delivery of accommodations by AHEAD membership. As members of AHEAD, Bemidji State University adheres to the AHEAD code of ethics.

We agree that these principles are the Code of Ethics for postsecondary disability service providers. As professionals, we are responsible for upholding, supporting and advancing these ideas whenever possible. Members of AHEAD agree to monitor themselves and their peers in accordance with the spirit and provisions of the code, as delineated by the following principles:

1. Postsecondary disability service providers are committed to facilitating the highest levels of educational excellence and potential quality of life for postsecondary students with disabilities.

2. Postsecondary disability service providers strive to achieve and maintain the highest levels of competence and integrity in all areas of assistance to adult students with disabilities. This support is guided by the consistent use of objective, professional judgment in all areas, especially when addressing the confidential nature of the student’s disability.
3. Postsecondary disability service providers continually participate in professional activities and educational opportunities designed to strengthen the personal, educational, and vocational quality of life for students with disabilities. This includes the on-going development of strategies, skills, research, and knowledge pertinent to the highest quality of disability service delivery whenever and wherever it occurs.

4. Postsecondary disability service providers carry out their responsibilities in accordance with all AHEAD professional standards and policy guidelines for adult students with disabilities. When certified, licensed or affiliated with other professionals or organizations, they comply with those professional guidelines as well.

5. Postsecondary disability service providers are actively engaged in supporting and clarifying all institutional, state, provincial and federal laws policies and procedures applicable to the service delivery to students with disabilities. Compliance implies that professionals will not condone or participate in any unethical or illegal acts discussed within these guidelines.

1.4 AHEAD Program Standards

As a member of the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) Bemidji State University endorses and follows the AHEAD Program Standards in the Disability Services Office. These standards reflect the maturation of the postsecondary disability services profession, describe the breadth of skills and knowledge required of personnel administering the Disability Services Office, and present a consensus among experts in the field requiring minimum essential services. These standards are intended to enhance the provision of accommodations for college students with disabilities by directing program evaluation and development efforts, improving personnel preparation and staff development, guiding the formulation of job descriptions of disability services personnel and expanding the vision of disability services in postsecondary education institutions.

There are 28 program standards across 8 categories identified as essential regardless of whether it is two or four year funding source, location or competitiveness. Implementation of these standards should provide consistency among institutions and help students by simplifying the selection of postsecondary disability services.

1. Consultation/Collaboration
   a. Serve as an advocate for issues regarding students with disabilities to ensure equal access.
   b. Provide disability representation on relevant campus committees.

2. Information Dissemination
   a. Disseminate information through institutional electronic and printed publications regarding disability services and how to access them.
   b. Provide services that promote access to the campus community.
   c. Disseminate information to students with disabilities regarding available campus and community disability resources.

3. Faculty/Staff Awareness
a. Inform faculty regarding academic accommodations, compliance with legal responsibilities, as well as instructional, programmatic, and curriculum modifications.
b. Provide consultation with administrators regarding academic accommodations, compliance with legal responsibilities, as well as instructional, programmatic, physical and curriculum modifications.
c. Provide disability awareness training for campus constituencies such as faculty, staff and administrators.
d. Provide information to faculty about services available to students with disabilities.

4. Academic Adjustments
   a. Maintain records that document the student’s plan for the provision of selected accommodations.
   b. Determine with students appropriate academic accommodations and services.
   c. Collaborate with faculty to ensure that reasonable academic accommodations do not fundamentally alter the program of study.

5. Counseling and Self-Determination
   a. Use a service delivery model that encourages students with disabilities to develop independence.

6. Policies and Procedures
   a. Develop, review, and revise written policies and guidelines regarding procedures for determining and accessing “reasonable accommodations.”
   b. Assist with development, review and revision of written policies and guidelines for institutional rights and responsibilities with respect to service provision.
   c. Develop, review and revise written policies and guidelines for student rights and responsibilities with respect to receiving services.
   d. Develop, review and revise written policies and guidelines regarding confidentiality of disability information.
   e. Assist with development, review, and revision of policies and guidelines for settling a formal complaint regarding the determination of a “reasonable accommodation.”

7. Program Administration and Evaluation
   a. Provide services that are aligned with the institution’s mission or services philosophy.
   b. Coordinate services for students with disabilities through a full-time professional.
   c. Collect student feedback to measure satisfaction with disability services.
   d. Collect data to monitor use of disability services.
   e. Report program evaluation data to administrators.
   f. Provide fiscal management of the office that serves students with disabilities.
g. Collaborate in establishing procedures for purchasing the adaptive equipment needed to assure equal access.

8. Training and Professional Development
   a. Provide disability services staff with on-going opportunities for professional development.
   b. Provide services by personnel with training and experience working with college students with disabilities (e.g., student development, degree programs).
   c. Assure that personnel adhere to relevant Codes of Ethics (e.g., AHEAD, APA).

1.5 Networking with Collaborative Agencies

The Coordinator of Disability Services will work with local, regional and federal agencies to ensure that the University remains in compliance with the law and services to students with disabilities are at comparable and consistent level with other postsecondary institutions. This is facilitated through the following:

1. Membership and support through Association or Higher Education and Disability. (AHEAD)
2. Office for Civil Rights (OCR)
3. The Disability Services Coordinator will contact OCR to request guidance in resolving issues that have no definitive rules or guidelines.
4. Regional Department of Vocational Rehabilitation
5. Continual collaborative efforts are maintained with several regional Department of Vocational Rehabilitation counselors when their client is a University student.
6. Regional Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
7. Continual collaborative efforts are maintained with area Regional Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing when their client is a University student.
8. State Services for the Blind-Minnesota
9. Continual collaborative efforts are maintained with area State Services for the Blind offices when their client is a University student.

1.6 Outside Resources for Students and Parents

**National**

**Directory of National Disability Organizations and Agencies**
www.pacer.org

**Directory of State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies**
www.parac.org/svrp.html

**National Council on Disability (NCD)**
www.ncd.gov
Office of Civil Rights- Chicago Office
US Department of Education
111 N. Canal Street, Suite 1053
Chicago, IL 60606-7204
(312) 886-8434
(312) 353-4888
(312) 353-2540
E-mail: OCR_Chicago@ed.gov

U.S. Department of Justice ADA Home Page
www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/

Statewide
Communication Center, State Services for the Blind
2200 University Avenue West Suite 204
St. Paul, MN 5514
(800) 652-9000

Courage Center
3915 Golden Valley Road
Golden Valley, MN 55422
(763) 520-0520 or (888) 846-8253
E-mail: www.courage.org

Northern Minnesota Department of Vocational Rehabilitation Offices:
Bemidji (218) 333-8208
Duluth (218) 723-4698
Grand Rapids (218) 327-4480
Hibbing (218) 262-6777
International Falls (218) 283-3436
Park Rapids (218) 732-9761
Roseau (218) 463-2075
Thief River Falls (218) 681-0949
Virginia (218) 748-2200

Minnesota State College and Universities Sr. Vice Chancellor for Academic/Student Affairs
500 Wells Fargo Place
30 East 7th Street
St. Paul, MN 55101
(651) 296-8012 or (888) 667-2848

Local:
Rehabilitation Services Branch
3400 1st Street North Suite 405
St. Cloud, MN 56304
(320) 308-2050

Veterans Administration Hospital
4801 8th Street North
St. Cloud, MN 56303
(320) 252-1670 or (800) 247-1739

Campus:

Academic Resource Center (ARC)
Oak Hall Basement
1500 Birchmont Dr NE # 33
Bemidji, MN 56601

Advising Success Center
Sanford Hall 101
1500 Birchmont Dr NE # 44
Bemidji, MN 56601-2699
(218) 755-4226

Admissions and Scholarships
Deputy Hall 102
1500 Birchmont Dr NE # 13
Bemidji, MN 56601-2699
(218) 755-2040

Affirmative Action Officer
Deputy Hall 350
1500 Birchmont Dr NE # 1
Bemidji, MN 56601-2699
(218) 755-3966

Career Services
Sanford Hall 102
1500 Birchmont Dr NE # 18
Bemidji, MN 56601-2699
(218) 755-2038

Disability Services Coordinator
Kathi Hagen, M.A.
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Bemidji State University
1500 Birchmont Drive NE # 43
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(218) 755-3883

**Health and Counseling Center**
Birch Hall 1A
1500 Birchmont Dr NE # 30
Bemidji, MN 56601-2699
(218) 755-2053

**Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs**
Dr. Nancy Erickson
Deputy Hall 301B
Bemidji State University
1500 Birchmont Drive NW # 3
Bemidji, MN 56601-2699
(218) 755-2015

**Math Help Room**
Hagg-Sauer Hall 232
1500 Birchmont Dr NE # 23
Bemidji, MN 56601-2699
(218) 755-2880

**Records and Registration**
Deputy Hall 101
1500 Birchmont Dr NE # 12
Bemidji, MN 56601-2699
(218) 755-2020

**Residential Life**
Walnut Hall
1500 Birchmont Dr NE # 33
Bemidji, MN 56601-2699
(218) 755-3750

**Vice President for Student Development and Enrollment**
Dr. Lisa Erwin
Deputy 313
Bemidji State University
1500 Birchmont Drive NE # 20
Bemidji, MN 56601-2699
(218) 755-2075

**Writing Resource Center**
Hagg-Sauer Hall 110A
1500 Birchmont Dr NE # 23
SECTION 2: FEDERAL LAWS AND LEGAL PRECEDENTS: DISABILITY SERVICES

2.1 Legal Disclaimer
The University holds the right to revise their policies with regard to disability policies and procedures to comply with the fluctuation of on-going judicial decisions.

2.2 Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a program access statute that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in any program or activity offered by an institution that receives federal financial support. The Section 504 mandate guarantees equal access to educational opportunities for students with disabilities.

Section 504
(As Amended)

“No otherwise qualified person with a disability in the United States…shall, solely on the basis of disability, be denied access to, or the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity provided by any institution receiving federal financial assistance.”

Definition of Terms
a. Person with a disability- someone with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more life activities. A person is considered a person with a disability if they have the disability, have a record of having a disability, or if they are regarded as having the disability.

b. The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) has clarified between having “a disability” and have “had a record of” or been “regarded as having” a disability. Their memo clarifies official OCR policy that in order to be entitled to academic adjustments and auxiliary aids, the student must have a current disability that substantially limits a major life activity.

c. Physical impairment- any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the following body systems: neurological, musculoskeletal, special sense organs, respiratory (including speech organs), cardiovascular, reproductive, digestive, genitourinary, hemic and lymphatic, skin, and endocrine.

d. Mental impairment- any psychological disorder such as mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities.
e. Substantially limits- unable to perform a life activity or significantly restricted as to the condition, manner or duration under which a major life activity can be performed, in comparison to the average person or most people.

f. Otherwise qualified – someone who has been admitted to the University as a regular student or someone admitted to a program.

2.3 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 1990
In Title II of the American’s with Disabilities Act, it specifies:

“Qualified individual with a disability means an individual with a disability who, with or without reasonable modifications to rules, policies or practices, the removal of architectural, communications, or transportation barriers, or the provision of auxiliary aids and services, meets the essential eligibility requirements for the receipt of services or the participation in programs or activities provided by a public entity.”

The purpose of ADA is to eliminate discrimination against individuals with disabilities. The ADA specifically includes HIV infection, which causes AIDS, past drug addition and alcoholism but EXCLUDES current illegal drug users.

2.4 Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
Student record information is governed by the Buckley Amendment or Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). FERPA gives students the following rights:

1. The right to inspect and review their educational records;
2. The right to amend their educational records;
3. And the right to have some control over the disclosure of information in their educational records.

Information regarding an individual’s disability information or the fact that they requested or received disability accommodations is kept confidential unless a signed release of information is authorized by the student. Students who are 18 years of age or older have the right to deny parental access to their educational records. The University must have a written release by the student before disclosing any information to parents, spouses or others.

2.5 State Statutes
The Minnesota Human Rights Act, a comprehensive civil rights statute, prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, sex and disability in the areas of employment, housing and real property, public services, education, credit services and business. Through a series of amendments, Minnesota’s law is broader and more protective than the federal American’s with Disabilities Act.
2.6 Confidentiality

Guidelines
Disability-related information in the Disability Services Office is treated as medical information and handled under the rules of confidentiality just as the medical information to be used to document the individual’s disability. No disability information will be released without the concerned individual’s written authorization unless there are extreme circumstances.

Disability information will be shared on a limited basis within the University community only when there is a need to know from the person seeking information about some specific aspect of the disability. Unless there is an emergency or some type of direct threat, written consent from the individual will be requested before sharing any medical or psychological information with a third party.

Extreme Exceptions
An extreme exception would be child abuse (due to mandatory reporting laws in the State of Minnesota), threats of suicide and/or homicide. While the role of the Disability Services Coordinator is to oversee the process of academic and program accessibility, it is possible that a relationship of trust may develop between the student and Disability Services Coordinator. It is the responsibility of the Coordinator to evaluate the student’s intentions and if serious, report the act to the appropriate person or agency. If a student indicates they are intending suicide, the Counseling Center at the University is immediately notified and the student is escorted to the Center. If the student is previously working with a mental health professional, together they notify the agency when possible. If no one is available the student is taken to the North Country Regional Hospital Emergency Room.

The Disability Services Office is assigned the responsibility of collecting and storing all disability-related documentation for students with disabilities. Working files are in locked filing cabinets. Access to these files is limited. All medical documentation is kept in a locked file in the Coordinator’s office. Only the Coordinator has access to medical documentation.

Information provided to University faculty discloses only that a student has a documented disability verified by the Disability Services Office and their need for specific accommodations.

Designated Office
The designated office to submit a request for accommodations, start a file, and submit medical information documenting the disability at Bemidji State University is the Disability Services Office. The person responsible for confidentiality of the individual student’s information is the Disability Services Coordinator.

Need to Know Basis
The need to know is very limited. Some needs may be:

1. Request for a course substitution;
2. Safety of the individual student;
3. Special housing needs in the residential halls;
4. Grievance procedures; and
5. Special financial aid considerations.

**Maintenance of Student Files**
A confidential file is kept on each student that includes the intake form, student contacts and faculty notification forms for each course the student requested accommodations.

A separate confidential file is established for medical/psychological records documenting the student’s disability and any updated medical records as a condition changes. These files are kept in a locked filing cabinet that only the Disability Services Coordinator has access to.

**Disposal of Records**
If a student is not enrolled in any class for one year, the file is placed in a confidential locked filing cabinet for inactive students. After a period of three years of non-enrollment/inactivity the files are shredded and the name, student ID # and nature of the disability are kept on an ongoing list of destroyed files and the date they were destroyed.

**Computer Database**
A database of active students and demographic information is maintained on an annual basis. Information is available for a limited number of years.

**2.7 Legal Implications: Individual Needs**
These policies are in general for all students with disabilities. However, each student’s needs are considered on a case-by-case basis. Basic determination of accommodations will be determined by the Disability Services Coordinator and the individual student, as well as faculty depending on documentation recommendations.

**SECTION 3: DOCUMENTATION OF DISABILITIES**

**3.1 Purpose of Documentation**
The purpose of documentation is to show that the individual has a current condition that affects one or more areas of their life such as seeing, hearing, walking, speaking, breathing, learning, working or caring for oneself and performing manual tasks; to assist in the determination of appropriate accommodations to give a student with a disability equal access to the university. The documentation from the appropriate certifying professional should include the impact of the student’s disability as well as any problems/challenges the individual may experience as a result of prescription medications. Bemidji State University is obligated to make a reasonable accommodation only to the known limitation of an otherwise qualified student with a disability. If a student’s documentation does not include information regarding a specific limitation, accommodations will not be provided.

**3.2 Eligibility Verification**
Eligibility for appropriate accommodations at the postsecondary educational level is dependent on the impact the disability has on learning. An individual may meet eligibility requirements in elementary and high school, receive services through Department of Vocational Rehabilitation or
collect Social Security Disability payments, but may not be considered disabled for the purposes of post/secondary education. Documentation of a disability is submitted to the Coordinator of Disability Services to determine eligibility for and appropriate academic adjustments. Eligibility is determined on a case-by-case basis based on the individual’s functional limitations.

Applicants for disability services must be admitted to or enrolled at Bemidji State University or one of their satellite programs at another institution and have provided qualifying disability documentation verifying the nature and the extent of the disability prior to receiving accommodations. The cost of documenting a disability is borne by the students. Students should be aware that they must begin documentation of their disability very early to ensure the disability services office has time to process the file. It takes at least 4-6 weeks to receive and process a student’s documentation.

The Disability Services Coordinator reserves the right to determine the appropriateness of an individual’s documenting paperwork and the requests for accommodations on a case-by-case basis. Additional information may be requested to determine eligibility or if a student has a progressive condition.

Submitting documentation, starting a disability file and qualifying for accommodations with the Disability Services Coordinator does not constitute a request for specific accommodations for a class. The student must request specific accommodations in a course. Once the student requests an academic adjustment every effort will be made to accommodate them.

The primary disabilities recognized in postsecondary education include (but are not limited to):

**Physical Disabilities: Required documentation**

The Disability Services Office accepts current diagnoses of physical disabilities that are based on appropriate diagnostic evaluations administered by trained, qualified, certified and/or licensed professionals. The diagnostician must be an appropriate professional who is not a family member of the individual.

Physical disability diagnosis categories include:

1. Orthopedic disability;
2. Blind or visual impairment;
3. Deaf or hard of hearing;
4. Acquired brain injury or traumatic brain injury;
5. Other health-related systemic disabilities.

The diagnostic report must include the following:

1. Clear disability diagnosis, including a clinical history that establishes the age of the student at the initial diagnosis, last contact professional had with the student, as well as any present secondary conditions;
2. Procedures used to diagnose the disability;
3. description of any medical and/or behavioral symptoms associated with the disability;
4. Discussion of medications, dosages, frequency and any adverse side effects attributable to their use that will affect the student’s ability to process and learn information;
5. Clear statement specifying functional manifestations (substantial limitations to one or more major life activities and degree of severity) due to the disability and/or medications for which the student may require accommodations;
6. Recommendations for accommodations, including rationale. If the accommodation recommendations are specific to limitations in learning (i.e., reading, mathematics, written expression), an appropriate psychoeducational or neuropsychological evaluation must be administered to document ability/achievement discrepancies.
7. Statement indicating functional limitations and how they may manifest in online learning situations (i.e., physical and cognitive processing time, ability to organize and plan their coursework, etc.). Will the student need additional time to write exams and manage assignments? If so, why and how much additional time. Rationale for extra time must be provided.

Specific Learning Disabilities: Required Documentation
Bemidji State University follows the suggested guidelines for documenting a learning disability in adolescents and adults as put forth by the Association on Higher Education and Disability (1997).

The Disability Services Office accepts diagnosis of specific learning disabilities that are based on comprehensive, age-appropriate psychoeducational evaluations that are within the past three (3) years. The assessment must be administered by a trained and qualified (certified or licensed) professional (psychologist, school psychologist, neuropsychologist, educational diagnostician) who has direct experience with adolescents and adults with learning disabilities. The diagnostician must be an impartial professional who is not a family member of the individual.

The name, title and professional credentials of the evaluator, including license and certification as well as the area of specialization, employment and the state the professional practices in should be clearly stated in the documentation. All documentation should be on letterhead.

An appropriate psychoeducational evaluation must include comprehensive measures in each of the following areas:

1. Aptitude- the evaluation must contain a complete intellectual assessment, and all subtests and standard scores must be reported;
2. Academic achievement- the evaluation must contain a comprehensive achievement battery with all subtests and standard scores reported. The test battery should include current levels of functioning in the relevant areas, such as reading (decoding and comprehension), mathematics, and oral and written expression;
3. Information processing- the evaluation should assess specific information processing areas such as short-and-long term memory, sequential memory, auditory and visual perception-processing, processing speed, executive function, and motor ability.

Examples of Measures
Aptitude

1. Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale III
2. Woodcock-Johnson III—Tests of Cognitive Abilities

Achievement

1. Wechsler Individual Achievement Test II (WIAT II)
2. Woodcock-Johnson III—Tests of Achievement

Screening tools such as Wide Range Achievement Test III (WRAT III) are not considered comprehensive measures of achievement and must be accompanied by a comprehensive measure such as those listed above. All instruments to measure these areas must be age appropriate.

Information Processing

1. Subtests of the WAIS-III
2. Subtests on the Woodcock-Johnson III—Tests of Cognitive Abilities
3. Wechsler Memory Scale III (WMS III)

Diagnostic Report

The diagnostic report must include the following information:

1. Diagnostic interview that addresses relevant historical information including age at initial diagnoses, past and current academic achievement, instructional foundation in area of diagnosis, past performance in areas of difficulty, and history and effectiveness of accommodations used in the past educational settings;
2. List of all instruments used in the test battery;
3. Discussion of test behavior and specific test results;
4. DSM IV diagnosis (include all five axis);
5. Diagnostic summary statement with statement with the following information:
   a. The summary should demonstrate the evaluator has ruled out alternative explanations for academic problems that result from poor education, poor motivation and/or study skills, emotional problems, attention problems and cultural language differences;
   b. Indication of how patterns in the individual’s cognitive ability, achievement and information processing reflect the presence of a learning disability;
   c. Clear statement that a learning disability does or does not exist, including a rule out of alternative explanations for the learning problems. Terms like “appears,” “suggests,” or “probable” in the diagnostic summary statements do not support a conclusive diagnosis. If the data indicate that a learning disability is not present, the evaluator should state that conclusion in the report;
   d. Clear statement specifying the substantial limitations to one or more major life activities;
   e. Psychometric summary of scores; and
f. Recommendations and rational for accommodations.
g. Statement indicating functional limitations and how they may manifest in online learning situations (i.e., physical and cognitive processing time, ability to organize and plan their coursework, etc.). If the student needs additional time to write exams and manage assignments, why, and how much additional time. Rationale for extra time must be provided.

The summary should also include any record of prior accommodation or auxiliary aids, including any information about specific conditions in which accommodations were used (exams, final exams, standardized testing, etc.)

The diagnostic report should indicate specific recommendations for accommodations as well as why the accommodation is recommended. If accommodations are not clearly identified in a diagnostic report, the Disability Services Coordinator reserves the right to ask for recommendations and rationale for them from the evaluator prior to the provision of services. The final determination of reasonable and appropriate accommodations rests with the Disability Services Coordinator.

Diagnoses of specific learning disabilities that do not contain psychoeducational measures may not be used for determining eligibility for academic accommodations. For example, school IEP’s or 504 Plans are not adequate documentation but they may be included with the required verification of a disability report. The Disability Services Office reserves the right to request reassessment when questions regarding previous assessment or previous service provision arise.

**Autism Spectrum Disorders: Required Documentation**
A diagnosis by a licensed mental health professional such as a psychologist, psychiatrist or neurologist is required.

The diagnostic report must include the following:

1. Clinical interview, relevant historical information, age at initial diagnosis, duration and severity of the disorder, discussion of medications, review of past and current academic achievement, and history of disability accommodations and their effectiveness
2. Procedures used to diagnose the disability; a list of all instruments used in the assessment and test scores as applicable
3. Discussion of the assessment results
4. DSM-IV diagnoses that includes all five axes
5. Diagnostic statement that includes a clear statement that a disability does or does not exist. Words like “appears,” “suggests,” and “probably” in the diagnostic summary statement do not support a conclusive diagnosis
6. Clear statement specifying the substantial limitations to one or more major life activities. If the limitations are in learning (reading, mathematics, and written expression), an appropriate psycho-educational evaluation must be administered to document ability/achievement discrepancies.
7. Discussion of medications and their impact on academic functioning (concentration, attention and sedation)
8. Recommendations for essential accommodations relative to the diagnosed disability, including rationale
9. Duration for which these accommodations should be provided based on the current assessment.

Further assessment may also be required if the individual has co-existing disabilities.

**Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD): Required Documentation**
The Disability Services Office will accept documentation no more than three (3) years old that are based on age-appropriate diagnostic evaluation administered by trained and qualified (certified or licensed) professionals such as psychiatrists, psychologists or neuropsychologists. Reports that are not accompanied by a comprehensive psychoeducational evaluation will need to be updated annually. The diagnostician must be an impartial professional who is not a family member of the individual.

The diagnostic report must include:

1. Diagnostic interview addressing relevant historical information including age at initial diagnosis, past and current academic achievement, evidence of behaviors that significantly impair functioning in two or more settings; history and effectiveness of accommodations in past educational settings, or if no history of accommodations exists, rationale as to why they are essential at this time
2. Procedures used to diagnose the disability including a list of all instruments used in the assessment
3. Discussion of the testing results and behavior including the symptoms that meet the criteria diagnosis. If the individual is evaluated while on medication, indicate the effect this may have had on assessment performance
4. DSM-IV diagnoses—include all five axes
5. Diagnostic summary statement that ADD/ADHD does or does not exist, including a rule out of alternative explanations for behaviors. Words like “suggests,” “appears,” or “has problems with” in the diagnostic statement does not support a conclusive diagnosis
6. Clear statement specifying the substantial limitations to one or more major life activities and the degree of severity. If the limitations are in learning—reading, mathematics, and written expression, an appropriate psychoeducational evaluation must be administered to document ability/achievement discrepancies
7. Statement indicating functional limitations and how they may manifest in online learning situations (i.e., physical and cognitive processing time, ability to organize and plan their coursework, etc.). Will the student need additional time to write exams and manage assignments? If so, why and how much additional time. Rationale for extra time must be provided
8. Recommendation regarding medications
9. Recommendations for accommodations, including rationale
Psychiatric Disabilities: Required Documentation

Psychiatric diagnoses should be within the year to be current. Evaluations must be completed by trained and qualified, licensed or certified professionals, psychologists, psychiatrists, neuropsychologists, school psychologists, certified professional counselors, or licensed social workers. The diagnostician must be an impartial professional who is not a family member of the individual.

Psychiatric disabilities may include (but are not limited to) the following diagnoses:

1. Depressive disorders
2. Post traumatic stress disorder
3. Bipolar disorder
4. Dissociative disorders

The diagnostic report must include the following:

1. Clinical interview, relevant historical information, age at initial diagnosis, duration and severity of the disorder, discussion of medications, review of past and current academic achievement, and history of disability accommodations and their effectiveness
2. Procedures used to diagnose the disability; a list of all instruments used in the assessment and test scores as applicable
3. Discussion of the assessment results
4. DSM-IV diagnoses that includes all five axes
5. Diagnostic statement that includes a clear statement that a disability does or does not exist. Words like “appears,” “suggests,” and “probably” in the diagnostic summary statement do not support a conclusive diagnosis
6. Clear statement specifying the substantial limitations to one or more major life activities. If the limitations are in learning (reading, mathematics, and written expression), an appropriate psychoeducational evaluation must be administered to document ability/achievement discrepancies.
7. Statement indicating functional limitations and how they may manifest in online learning situations (i.e., physical and cognitive processing time, ability to organize and plan their coursework, etc.). Will the student need additional time to write exams and manage assignments? If so, why and how much additional time. Rationale for extra time must be provided
8. Discussion of medications and their impact on academic functioning (concentration, attention and sedation)
9. Recommendations for essential accommodations relative to the diagnosed disability, including rationale
10. Duration for which these accommodations should be provided based on the current assessment.

Due to the changing nature of psychiatric disabilities, an updated narrative specifying diagnosis, medication and current functional limitations is required as changes with any duration occur. Further assessment may also be required if the individual has co-existing learning disabilities.
Rehabilitated Drug Addiction: Required Documentation
Drug addiction should be diagnosed and treated by physicians with a specialty in addiction, clinical psychologists, psychiatrists and licensed mental health professionals or State Health Department certified addiction counselors who are supervised by psychologists or psychiatrists. The diagnostician must be an impartial professional who is not a family member of the individual.

The diagnostic report must include the following:

1. Clear statement of successful completion of a supervised drug rehabilitation program with the DSM-IV diagnosis. A dated and signed statement attesting to the compliance with appropriate post-rehabilitation treatment within the past year.
2. A summary of assessment procedures and evaluation instruments used to make the diagnosis
3. A summary of qualitative and quantitative information used to make the diagnosis
4. Medical information relating to the individual student’s needs including functional limitation(s) and the impact of medication on the student’s ability to meet the demands of the postsecondary environment
5. Clear statement specifying the substantial limitations to one or more major life activities and the degree of severity. If the limitations are in learning—reading, writing and mathematics, an appropriate evaluation must be administered to document ability/achievement discrepancies. Additional documentation may be requested if additional disabling conditions are indicated in order to determine appropriate accommodations.

Alcoholism: Required Documentation
Alcoholism should be diagnosed by a qualified professional such as a medical doctor specializing in addiction, clinical psychologist, psychiatrist, licensed mental health professionals, state certified addiction counselors who are supervised by psychologists and/or psychiatrists. The diagnosing professional should be impartial and not a family member of the individual.

The diagnostic report should include the following:

1. Clear statement of the disability, including the DSM-IV diagnosis and a summary of the current symptoms
2. Documentation must include the current impact the alcoholism has on the person’s functioning in the academic environment
3. The age of the documentation is dependent on the identified effects on the individual; students requesting accommodations may be required to present more current documentation depending on the impact of the alcoholism
4. A summary of the assessments and evaluations used to diagnose the condition must be listed
5. Summary of qualitative and quantitative information supporting the diagnosis
6. Medical information affecting the individual’s ability to function in the postsecondary environment including the impact of any medications
7. A statement of the functional impact of the disability on learning or other major life activities and the degree to which they effect the individual in relation to the accommodations being requested to determine the appropriate accommodations.

If there are co-existing problems with learning (reading, writing or mathematics) the student may be asked to provide further information from the appropriate documenting professional.

**Visual Disorders (Not Acuity): Required Documentation**

Learning related visual disabilities include (but are not limited to):

1. Ocular motility/dysfunction/eye movement disorders
2. Vergence dysfunction/inefficiency in using both eyes together
3. Strabismus/misalignment of the eyes
4. Amblyopia/lazy eye
5. Accommodative disorders/focusing problems
6. Visual sensory disorders
7. Motor integration

These conditions must be documented by a qualified professional with experience in conducting assessment and diagnosing the needs of adult learners. Optometrists are typically the diagnosing professional in this area. The diagnostician must be impartial and not a family member of the individual.

The following information should be included in the documentation:

1. Clear statement of the visual disability as it relates to the learning environment listing current numerical description and the limitations of the individual. Information should be current and reflect the impact the disability has on the individual’s functioning
2. Statement should include assessment procedures and evaluation instruments used to make the diagnosis and a summary of the evaluation results, including standardized test scores
3. Symptoms present and used in criteria for diagnosis
4. Medical information pertaining to the individual’s needs and the status of their vision (stable, unstable/deteriorating, likely to improve, etc.) and the impact on the individual in the postsecondary environment
5. Descriptive narrative about the individual’s abilities which may be used to help determine appropriate accommodations (including use of corrective lenses or ongoing visual therapy, etc., when or if appropriate)
6. Statement of the functional impact or limitation of the disability on learning or other major life activities and the degree to which it impacts the individual in the learning environment in which accommodations are being requested
7. Statement indicating functional limitations and how they may manifest in online learning situations (i.e., physical and cognitive processing time, ability to organize and plan their coursework, etc.). Will the student need additional time to write exams
and manage assignments? If so, why and how much additional time. Rationale for extra time must be provided.

Further assessment by an appropriate professional may be required if there is/are co-existing learning disabilities or other disabling conditions are indicated in order to determine appropriate accommodations for the individual.

3.3 Process to Start a File with Disability Services for On-Line Students

Students enrolled in the Bemidji State University distance learning programs are entitled to disability accommodations as any enrolled student taking courses. Students must self-identify that they have a disability and must provide documentation of their disability to the Coordinator. Accommodations for students with documented disabilities are the responsibility of the enrolling institution.

Academic accommodations for students with documented disabilities registered through the Center for Extended Learning and the most beneficial way of providing those accommodations will be determined on an individual basis, however, the same general principles based on the intent of the American’s with Disabilities Act are applied equally to students enrolled on campus or through distance learning programs. Because of the limitations of some disabilities, being able to enroll in distance learning programs may not be ideal for some students. Students with documented disabilities enrolled in distance learning programs are encouraged to contact the Coordinator of Disability Services to start a file so they may receive appropriate academic accommodations.

3.4 Documentation

Upon acceptance to a distance learning program, students who request accommodations must submit documentation from a qualified and appropriate professional to the coordinator of disability services for certification. Guidelines for documenting a disability are provided in Section 3 of this manual. Once a student provides documentation of his/her disability the Coordinator will act as liaison with the online course faculty and the student to provide appropriate and reasonable academic accommodations.

3.5 Extended Time for Course Completion

Once a student has received his/her syllabi to determine course requirements, the student should notify the course instructor and Coordinator of Disability Services that additional time may be necessary to complete the course requirements. The Coordinator, instructor and the student will work together to determine a reasonable extension of time for completion, including new deadlines for assignments once the need for an extension has been determined. Unlimited time to complete a course is not granted.

3.6 Extended Time for Degree Completion

The Center for Extended Learning adheres to the standards for master’s degrees as stated in the university graduate catalog. Exceptions to these requirements will be considered on a case by case basis with appropriate medical documentation provided in advance of the request.
3.7 Testing Accommodations

Students coming to the university to write their exams will be afforded the same accommodations as those students on campus. The university will provide large print exams, readers, scribes, computer access or other accommodations as required. Testing accommodations for American College Testing and ETS students is applied for through each specific program as needed. Accommodations are granted and overseen by each respective program.

3.8 Graduate Students

Students in graduate school who have a documented disability are eligible for accommodations through Disability Services. Students need to meet with their program advisor and the Disability Services Coordinator after being admitted the University, to determine any possible needs the student may have. If the student either cannot complete the program requirements in the established time (7 years), or has a medical crisis due to their disability, students should meet with their advisor to establish in writing what changes from the University requirements are needed. The Disability Services Coordinator will help the student make a formal appeal.

SECTION 4: DISABILITIES-CHARACTERISTICS AND REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

This section was compiled using “A Desk Reference Guide for Faculty and Staff” published by the Mississippi State University under a grant received from the U. S. Department of Education in 1996, the “Faculty Training Tips: Guidance for Teaching Students with Disabilities”, published by LRP Publications, 2005, and “The Policy Book” by LRP Publications 2000.

Academic accommodations are based on the certification of the individual’s disability and provided to the student only when a limitation has been documented in the professional’s evaluation. The purpose of an accommodation is to provide students with disabilities meaningful access to the University’s academic programs.

Commonly used academic accommodations may include:

1. Large print formats
2. Alternative ways of completing assignments (e.g., oral presentation versus written papers)
3. Advance notice of assignments
4. Examinations administered in multiple parts
5. Extended testing time
6. Extended time to complete a program or parts of a program
7. Advance access to syllabi
8. Course substitution
9. Priority registration
10. Early advising
11. Taped textbooks
12. Interpreter
4.1 Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD)

ADD/ADHD is called Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and is neurologically based medical problem. It is a developmental disability characterized by inattention, impulsivity, and sometimes hyperactivity. The results can lead to lifelong problems.

Students with ADD may demonstrate one or more problem characteristics and the form may be mild, moderate or severe:

1. Concentration
2. Listening
3. Starting, organizing and completing tasks
4. Following directions
5. Making transitions
6. Interacting with others
7. Producing work at a consistently normal level
8. Organizing problems that involve multiple tasks
9. Performing better in morning classes or evening classes
10. Needing to sit at the front of the class
11. Needing assignment organizers
12. Needing assignments in writing
13. Experiencing difficulty following through with several directions at once
14. Having problems organizing multi-step tasks
15. Benefiting from structure using lists, schedules
16. Benefiting from ADD coaching

Accommodations may include:

1. Reduced course load
2. Extended time to complete assignments
3. Taped texts
4. Readers
5. Assistive technology (calculators, word processors)
6. Extended time for testing

4.2 Autism Spectrum Disorders

These disorders are characterized by severe deficits and impairment in multiple areas of development. These include impairment in reciprocal social interaction, impairment in communication, and the presence of stereotyped behavior, interests and activities (DSM-IVAR, 2000, p.49).

Students with autism spectrum disorders usually demonstrate one or more of the following characteristics:

1. Challenges with interacting appropriately or well with peers
2. Organization problems/time management
3. Ability to concentrate (focus) on tasks especially if they aren’t of interest to the student
4. Making transitions/implementing change
5. Producing work on time and at a consistently normal level
6. Experiencing difficulty with multi-step directions or tasks
7. Generalizing and integrating skills needed for established routines
8. May exhibit social anxiety and depression

Accommodations may include:

1. Weekly meetings via phone or email with disability services staff to help with organization, time management, and follow-through (students who desire a face-to-face meeting and live near the university should call to schedule a meeting.)
2. Peer-to-peer mentoring
3. Note takers
4. Priority registration
5. Reduced course load

4.3 Blind/Impaired Vision

Visual impairments include disorders in the sense of vision that affect the central vision acuity, the field of vision, color perception, or binocular visual function. The American Medical Association defined legal blindness as visual acuity not exceeding 20/200 in the better eye with correction, or a limit in the field of vision that is less than a 20 degree angle (tunnel vision). Legal blindness may be caused by tumors, infections, injuries, retrolental fibroplasis, cataracts, glaucoma, diabetes, vascular impairments, or myopia. Visual disabilities vary widely. Some students may use a guide dog, others a white cane, while others may not require any mobility assistance.

Accommodations may include:

1. Reading lists or syllabi in advance to permit time for transferring into alternate format
2. Textbooks order in the preferred medium of the student
3. Note taking devices such as pocket Braille computers
4. Clear black print on white or pale yellow paper for students with visual impairments
5. Testing accommodations: taped tests, reading of tests, scribe, extended time, enlarged print, computer word processing software with speech access
6. Materials presented on the power point or on transparencies read out loud

4.4 Closed Head Injury/Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

Head injury is one of the fastest growing types of disabilities especially in the age range of 15 to 28 years. Over 500,000 cases are reported hospitalized each year. There is a wide range of differences in the effects of TBI on the individual, but most cases result in some type of impairment. The functions that may be affected include: memory, cognitive/perceptual communication, speed of thinking, communication, spatial reasoning, conceptualization, psychosocial behaviors, motor abilities, sensory perception and physical abilities.
Students with TBI may demonstrate one or more problem characteristics and form may be mild, moderate or severe:

1. Organizing thoughts, cause-effect relationships and problem solving
2. Processing information and word retrieving
3. Generalizing and integrating skills
4. Interacting with others
5. Compensating for memory loss

Accommodations may include:

1. Priority registration
2. Reduced course load
3. Taped textbooks
4. Extended time to complete assignments
5. Course substitution for nonessential course requirements in major
6. Extended time for test taking
7. Alternative type of exam
8. Blank card or paper to assist in reading
9. Calculator
10. Extended time for in class assignments
11. Word processor with spell check
12. Calculator for students with a disability in the area of math

4.5 Deafness/Hearing Impairments

More individuals in the United States have a hearing impairment than any other type of physical disability. A hearing impairment is any type or degree of auditory impairment while deafness is an inability to use hearing as a means of communication. Hearing loss may be sensorineural, involving an impairment of the auditory nerve; conductive, a defect in the auditory system which interferes with sound reaching the cochlea; or a mixed impairment, involving both sensorineural and conductive. Hearing loss is measured in decibels and may be mild, moderate, or profound. A person who is born with a hearing loss may have language deficiencies and exhibit poor vocabulary and syntax. Many students with hearing loss may use hearing aids and rely on lip reading. Others may require an interpreter.

Accommodations may include:

1. Written supplement to oral instructions, assignments, and directions
2. Visual aids as often possible
3. Speaker repeating the questions that other students in the class ask
4. Test accommodations: extended time, access to word processor, interpreted directions
5. Unfamiliar vocabulary written on the board or a handout
6. Interpreter seated where the student can see the interpreter and the lecturer
7. Excess noise reduced as much as possible to facilitate communication
4.6 Orthopedic/Mobility Disorders

A variety of orthopedic/mobility-related disabilities result from congenital conditions, accidents or progressive neuromuscular diseases. These disabilities include conditions such as spinal cord injury (paraplegia or quadriplegia), cerebral palsy, spina bifida, amputation, muscular dystrophy, cardiac conditions, cystic fibrosis, paralysis, polio/post polio, and stroke. Functional limitations and abilities vary widely even within one group of disabilities. Accommodations vary greatly and can best be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Accommodations may include:

1. Test accommodations: extended time, access to word processors
2. Special computer equipment/software: voice activated word processing, word prediction, keyboard modification
3. Extra time for assignments due to slow writing speed
4. Course substitution in some cases
5. Taped texts

4.7 Other Disorders: Primarily, Systemic Disorders

A large number of students have disabilities that do not necessarily fall into the major categories already discussed but are covered by Section 504/ADA. The degrees to which these disabilities affect students in the academic setting vary widely. At times it is not the condition itself but the medication that is required to control symptoms that impairs academic performance. Common side effects of medications include fatigue, memory loss, shortened attention span, loss of concentration, and drowsiness. In some cases the degree of impairment may vary from time to time because of the nature of the disability or the medication. Some conditions are progressive and others may be stable.

A partial list of other disabilities includes:

1. AIDS
2. Arthritis
3. Asthma
4. Burns
5. Cancer
6. Cardiovascular disorders
7. Cerebral palsy
8. Chronic pain
9. Diabetes mellitus
10. Epilepsy
11. Fibromyalgia
12. Hemophilia
13. Lupus
14. Motor neuron diseases
15. Multiple sclerosis
16. Muscular dystrophy
17. Renal-kidney disease
18. Respiratory disorders
19. Sickle cell anemia
20. Stroke
21. Tourette’s syndrome

Accommodations may include:

1. Extended time for exams
   A student is required to makeup missed assignments and tests.

4.8 Psychiatric/Psychological Disorders

Psychiatric/psychological disorders cover a wide range of disorders such as neuroses, psychoses and personality disorders. The majority of psychological disorders are controlled using a combination of medications and psychotherapy. If the student self-discloses to the instructor, it may be appropriate to discuss problems and side effects associated with medications. Only a limited number of court cases have been conducted to set precedents for reasonable accommodations for students with any of these disorders. Based on court rulings on other types of disabilities it is probably that some of the following accommodations may be considered appropriate and reasonable.

Accommodations may include:

1. Extended time for exams, quiet testing area with a proctor
2. Incompletes or late withdrawals in place of course failures in the event of prolonged illness
3. Assistance with time management and study skills
4. Encouragement to use relaxation and stress reducing techniques during exams
5. Flexibility in the attendance requirements in case of health-related absences
   
   A student is required to make up missed assignments and tests.

4.9 Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD)

A learning disability is a permanent neurological disorder that affects the manner in which information is received, organized, remembered, and then retrieved or expressed. Students with learning disabilities possess average to above average intelligence. The disability is demonstrated by a significant discrepancy between expected and actual performance in one or more of the basic functions: memory, oral expression, listening comprehension, written expression, basic reading skills, reading comprehension, mathematical calculation, or mathematical reasoning.

Terms associated with learning disabilities include:

1. Dyslexia-inability to read
2. Dyscalculia-inability to do mathematics
3. Dysgraphia-inability to write words with appropriate syntax
4. Dysphasia-inability to speak with fluency or sometimes to understand others
5. Figure-ground perception-inability to see an object from a background of other objects
6. Visual discrimination-inability to see the difference in objects
7. Auditory figure-ground perception-inability to hear one sound among others
8. Auditory sequencing-inability to hear sounds in the right order

Characteristics may include an inability to perform in accordance with the norm in such areas as:

1. Oral language-understanding, word recall, grammar, pronunciation
2. Listening comprehension
3. Written expression-spelling errors, sentence structure, organization and development
4. Basic reading skills-slow reading rate and retention, tracking skills, difficulty with syntax on tests
5. Mathematical reasoning and calculation-basic operations, number reversals and confusion with symbols, copying problems, concept of time
6. Social skills-spatial disorientation, low frustration level, low self-esteem, problem resolution
7. Study skills and time management

Accommodations may include:

(No student will need all of these, and specific accommodations are based on the diagnostic information that is on file in the Disability Services Office)

1. Reduced course load
2. Priority registration
3. Extended time to complete assignments
4. Course substitution for nonessential course requirements in the major
5. Extended test time
6. Alternative type of exam
7. Taped textbooks
8. Extended time for in-class assignments
9. Calculator for student with math disability

4.10 Substance Abuse (Rehabilitated)

A rehabilitated substance abuser’s performance is dependent upon the length of time the substance was abused, the age of onset, and the type of substance(s) abused.

Characteristics and accommodations may be similar to ADHD or there may be comorbid psychological disabilities.

4.11 Vision Disorders: Not Acuity

Learning-related visual disabilities include, but are not limited to ocular motility dysfunction/eye movement disorders, vergence dysfunction/inefficiency in using both eyes together, strabismus/misalignment of the eyes, amblyopia/lazy disorders and motor integration. The functional limitation varies according to the intensity of the problem.
The characteristics of these disorders may include:

1. Eye fatigue
2. Slow reading
3. Difficulty with maps/charts

Accommodations may include:

1. Taking frequent breaks to rest eyes
2. Using extended time for testing

4.12 Temporary Medical Conditions

Some disabling conditions are temporary but the individual may need accommodations for a period of time. Students recovering from surgery, injury, or severe illness should be aware that reasonable accommodations may be appropriate for a limited time period. Students in these situations should contact the Coordinator of Disability Services for assistance. Documentation of the temporary condition is required and reasonable accommodations will be determined based on the nature of the student’s medical condition.

Some accommodations may include:

1. A liaison with faculty regarding absences
2. Working with instructors to facilitate incompletes or course withdrawals
3. Making up exams
4. Other accommodations as may be deemed appropriate

4.13 Medical Emergencies

Student disorders may require immediate medical responses. Students with medical conditions that may necessitate emergency medical responses should self-identify to the Disability Services Office and document their condition. Students will be asked to provide the following information:

1. The particular disorder and what the consequences of the disorder may be
2. Documentation from the physician/neurologist

SECTION 5: ACCESS TO THE UNIVERSITY

5.1 Activities: Theatre works, Guest speakers, etc.

The university theatre building is physically accessible to persons with mobility disabilities. Electric door openers are available on most public campus buildings and elevators are available in those buildings.

For individuals wishing to attend public presentations and need a sign language interpreter for
the event, please contact the Coordinator of Disability Services at 218-755-3883. We ask for a two-week notice if an interpreter is requested to facilitate the accommodation.

5.2 Admissions, Readmissions, and Registration (Center for Extended Learning)

Admission

Admission to the university is open to students who rank in the upper half of their graduating class or who achieve a composite score of 21 or above on the ACT. In addition, college preparation courses must be satisfied. Admission to specific major may require that additional criteria be satisfied. A student who does not meet the minimum admission criteria may be offered conditional admission status. All conditionally admitted freshmen are encouraged to participate in the University assessment program and basic preparation classes may be recommended for academic success. Application and admission requirements are the same for students with disabilities. More information about admission requirements is available in the student undergraduate catalog.

Readmission

Students who are in good academic standing when they leave the university need to do nothing for readmission when they return. Students who have fallen out of good academic standing and were suspended need to petition for readmission to the university. Students with disabilities petitioning to return to the university should work with the Records and Disability Services Offices for readmission.

Registration

Students are assigned an advisor to help with advising and course selection within their program. All students should work with their assigned advisor to select their courses. Students with disabilities who need help with the registration process should contact the Disability Services Office for help with registration. Priority registration is an accommodation that some students with disabilities may receive. Priority registration is always the Friday just prior to the beginning of registration. Students with priority registration are informed of this accommodation in advance and it is their responsibility to meet with their advisor prior to the date of priority registration. If a student fails to use priority registration they may register as they finish their schedule. However, if a student doesn’t register on time and a course fills up, the student with a disability cannot “bump” another student for a spot in the course. It is the student’s responsibility to use their priority registration time responsibly.

5.3 University Bookstore

The university bookstore meets ADA standards of physical access with aisle width and other regulations. Personal assistance will be provided in the bookstore for students whose limitations necessitate it. Students who require assistance in the bookstore may access that assistance through three avenues. Students who require personal assistance during the day may request help through the Disability Services Office in 202 Sanford Hall. A student peer will be assigned to help you get your books and supplies. It is best to give some advanced notice that help is
needed if possible. Students may also request assistance at the customer service counter or at the checkout counter in the bookstore. (When the Disability Services Office is closed students should use this avenue for assistance.) Finally, students may also order their books online at the bookstore website: www.whywaitforbooks.com. This website is secure and students may order their books to be pre-packaged and may pick them up at the information desk in the bookstore or you may request that the books be mailed to you.

5.4 Facilities

Buildings and Other
Campus programs must be accessible. When courses/labs and events are held in older buildings that are not accessible, alternatives may include moving a course to an accessible building as well as other adaptations as necessary. Students who have physical accessibility issues should meet with the Coordinator of Disability Services as soon as possible.

Field Trips and Off-Campus Projects:
Accommodations for students with disabilities who have activities for courses that are held off-campus will be provided so that students are able to benefit from the event. Students with this requirement should work closely with the coordinator of Disability Services and the Professor to ensure arrangements are made in a timely manner.

5.5 Financial Aid

Students with disabilities are provided the same assistance in obtaining financial aid and student employment as is provided to all students on campus. If a student fails to meet satisfactory progress for financial aid due to their disabling condition, documentation of the extenuating circumstance will be provided to the Coordinator of Disability of Services and a release of information will be signed so that appropriate information may be released to the financial aid office to support a financial aid petition.

Students with or without disabilities may enroll at the university at less than full time status. If students enroll with a reduced course load, it is understood that some insurance companies may no longer provide coverage to them if they are still on their parent’s insurance policy. To be considered full-time while attending part-time for purposes of continuing insurance coverage, a letter of support from the treating physician is required. The letter must clearly state why the student cannot attend school full-time, what adverse consequences would result if the student were full-time and how long the condition is likely to continue.

MNSCU Tuition Policy for Deaf Students
The Minnesota Legislature passed a bill within the Higher Education Law, which was signed by Governor Pawlenty, requiring the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities to provide “tuition assistance” to deaf students. The law takes effect on July 1, 2005 and reads as follows:

11.12 Sec. 4. [135A.165] [DEAF STUDENTS; TUITION ASSISTANCE.]
11.13 (a) For the purpose of this section, a "deaf person" means
11.14 an individual with a hearing loss of such severity that the individual must depend primarily on visual communication, such as writing, lip reading, manual communication, and gestures.

11.17 (b) A deaf person, who is a resident student as defined in section 136A.101, subdivision 8, is entitled to tuition assistance for the tuition and fees remaining after deducting any federal or state grants or other public or private grants made to the person for the purpose of paying the tuition and fees at a Minnesota state college or university or the University of Minnesota. A deaf person must receive either a federal Pell grant or a state grant under section 136A.121 for a term to receive tuition assistance for that term.

The deaf individual applies for admission to Bemidji State University and must also apply for the Federal Pell Grant and a Minnesota State Grant to be applied at that college/university. At any time the individual chooses, s/he might wish to contact the Disability Services Coordinator for interpreter services. The individual will be expected to provide documentation of their deafness at that time.

The student will be informed of their Pell grant award and MN State Grant through the normal financial aid processes. If s/he is eligible for either the Pell or State grant, the university will apply these and any other public or private grants to the costs of tuition and fees. Any remaining amount will be covered by the university. The covered costs will include actual tuition charged to the student, mandatory fees as defined in System Policy, plus those optional fees charged to all students at that institution minus any of the following: Pell Grant, MN State Grant, institutional grants and scholarships and private grants or scholarships received by the student. The remaining amount is the Deaf Student Tuition Assistance.

It is the responsibility of the deaf individual to:

1. Apply for the Federal Pell Grant and MN State Grant through the regular financial aid application process (FAFSA);
2. To contact the Disability Services Coordinator to set up an appointment to document their deafness and request interpreters and/or other accommodations as needed;
3. To provide a copy of their financial aid award letter indicating that they are eligible for a Federal Pell Grant and/or a MN State Grant to the Disability Services Coordinator who will notify the financial aid office that the individual has provided documentation of their deafness. At that time the financial aid office will calculate the amount of the student’s tuition assistance according to the stipulated formula and will place a Minnesota Deaf Student Assistance Grant on the student’s account in that amount;
4. Review their financial aid eligibility each term, and confirm with the Coordinator their Federal Pell Grant and MN State Grant funding prior to the start up of the new semester.
5.6 Housing/Residential Life

Students enrolled in online course work taking at least six credits (half-time status) may live in the dorms on campus. The university has housing for students with documented disabilities to accommodate their needs. Students with documented disabilities requesting special housing needs should apply to the Residential Life Office at least two months prior to the beginning of their first semester to allow the university housing staff enough time to meet the student’s needs. For all housing requests based on a disabling condition, students must provide documentation of their condition and the specific housing accommodations needed. All requests must be supported by the student’s documentation of their condition. Interested students should contact the coordinator of Disability Services to document their disabilities and arrange for accommodations.

5.7 Library

Bemidji State University Library is committed to providing all users with equal access to the library programs, services and materials. The most efficient services may be received between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. when the library is more fully staffed. Advance notice is appreciated and appointments can be made by calling 218-755-3342 or 1-800-860-0234. For students off campus, please check the library home page for remote access to library resources.

Maps of the campus with disability access information are available at www.bemidjistate.edu/students/services/disability/resources. Click on a copy of the map for the area of the campus that you are interested in visiting.

Parking for individuals with disabilities who have a state handicap permit is available behind the library off 16th street. The library entrance is equipped with power doors and the library is wheelchair accessible. A courtesy phone (for local calls) is available in the library entrance.

Services for persons with disabilities may include:

1. Retrieval of library materials for individuals who are unable to retrieve materials themselves. Advance notice is appreciated and you may schedule an appointment by calling 218-755-3342 or 1-800-860-0234.
2. Assistance in completing library forms may be accessed through the reference desk.
3. Photocopying of library materials if the photo copier is not accessible may be requested at the reference desk. If a large amount of copying is necessary please contact the reference desk at 218-755-3342 to arrange a time that is convenient for you.
4. Assistance with the library’s online system and other data bases should be requested at the reference desk in the library.
5. Reference service is generally available 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Please call 218-755-2955 or check online on the library home page at www.bemidjistate.edu/library.
6. Assistive technology is available; in particular video magnification, and is located on the main floor adjacent to the reference collection. Potential users can access the technology through the reference desk.
7. Work stations are accessible for a variety of heights and disability needs. Check with the reference desk if assistance is needed.

5.8 Public Safety: Parking permits
Vehicles displaying a valid disabled parking permit or license plate, regardless of the state of issue, may park in any designated disabled parking stall, or other legal stall on campus without a BSU parking permit, including metered stalls at no charge.

Temporary parking permits
For students, faculty, and staff who are temporarily disabled, a temporary disabled permit is available at the Security Office, 755-3888, Walnut Hall. Supporting documentation of temporary disability is required prior to issuance of a temporary disabled permit. Temporary disabled permits may be issued for up to two weeks. Persons with disabilities requiring disabled parking privileges beyond two weeks must apply with the State of Minnesota for a temporary disabled parking permit.

Emergency response
Campus Security is responsible for all emergency responses, including medical alerts, evacuations, etc. At the beginning of each semester, Campus Security is notified by Disability Services -- with the student’s permission-- that a student with a disability who may require an emergency medical response is on campus. Campus Security keeps records of the student’s classes and can respond accordingly.

5.9 Publication of Disability Services and Other Information
Faculty are required to print contact information for the Coordinator of Disability Services for students with disabilities who require accommodations in their course syllabus. All publications used by the university provide information to readers to enable them to get the publication in a format that is accessible to them. Where appropriate, the Disability Services Office will work with university staff to make the publication accessible.

5.10 Recruitment
Recruitment of students to the university does not discriminate on the basis of disability, race or gender. The university will provide reasonable accommodations to prospective students and their families while they are considering and pursuing admission to BSU.

5.11 Scholarships
Upon request the Admissions and Scholarships Office can provide new and returning students with a brochure listing all University and departmental scholarship information. Students should speak with a specific department regarding information about their scholarships. In addition there are some scholarships available specific to students with disabilities and for individuals who work with people with disabilities. For disability specific scholarship information students should contact the Coordinator of Disability Services.
5.12 Student Conduct

Individuals with disabilities are subject to the university student code of conduct, as are all students. Inappropriate behavior will be referred to the Student Conduct Office (Department of Security & Safety) if a threat to safety of self or others. The Student Conduct Officer will collaborate with the Coordinator of Disability Services, as appropriate, when the student has a disability.

Persons with certain disabilities can have behaviors that appear to be inappropriate. In this instance, the Coordinator will work closely with the student, his/her physician, the instructor and other indicated persons to determine the most appropriate accommodations for the student.

5.13 Student Employment

Students with disabilities meet the same employment criteria that all students must meet. Students who meet the financial aid criteria, may have work study grants as part of their financial aid package. Individuals with disabilities follow the same general campus non-discrimination policy. Further information on student employment may be obtained from the Financial Aid Office.

5.14 Student Center for Health and Counseling

Students with disabilities, enrolled in online programs through the university, are entitled to use the Student Center for Health and Counseling in Birch Hall with the same provisions and responsibilities as other students. Students wishing to use health services for medications and monitoring of their health conditions should work directly with the staff at the Student Center for Health and Counseling. Issues with insurance and medications are to be addressed with that office.

The Student Center for Health and Counseling also provides free short-term counseling related to personal issues for all enrolled Bemidji State University students. The Disability Services Office refers students to the Center when there is a conflict and the student does not already have a personal counselor. When students sign a release, the counselor from the Center and the Disability Services Coordinator will collaborate with the student on strategy development, problem solving or treatment planning. Students taking online course work and live in the dorms are eligible for these services. Students living out of the area who wish to seek counseling help and are willing to drive to the university may schedule appointments with the Student Center for Health and Counseling.

SECTION 6: ACCESS TO ACADEMIC SERVICES (Accommodations/Adjustments)

Academic accommodations are adjustments that provide equal access to academic programs/information for students with documented disabilities. Academic requirements that the university deems essential to a program of instruction or is directly related to a licensing requirement is not to be regarded as discriminatory. Court rulings or decisions are clear that accommodation requests from students need not be provided when a) the student is not qualified; b) the accommodation would result in a fundamental alteration of the program; c) the institution
is being asked to address a personal need; or d) the accommodation would impose an undue financial or administrative burden.

Auxiliary aids, benefits or services, to be equally effective, are not required to produce the identical result or level of achievement for disabled and non-disabled persons; however, they must provide individuals with disabilities equal opportunity to obtain the same result and to gain the same benefit.

Academic adjustments provide equal opportunity for students with documented disabilities. They are flexible to meet the different disabilities and are consistent with documentation guidelines. Accommodation requests that alter the academic standards of a course/program are not granted. Academic adjustments must be requested in a timely manner dependent on the request; preferably, students should request accommodations within one week of the beginning of the courses to allow time to implement the accommodation in a timely manner. Requests for sign language interpreters require at least a two week notice prior to the time of need.

6.1 Qualifying for Disability Services

Eligibility for accommodations is dependent on the university guidelines; because a student receives services through disabled veterans, social security disability or vocational rehabilitation, they may not always qualify for services at the university.

Self-identification
The student is required to register with the Disability Services Office and request services. The student is not eligible for accommodations until he/she has provided documentation of a disabling condition and has been certified eligible to receive accommodations based on individual documentation of disability. Once it has been determined that a student is eligible to receive accommodations it is their responsibility to request accommodations each new term, in courses where accommodations are determined necessary.

Documentation
It is the student’s responsibility to provide documentation of their disability, per the guidelines in Section 3.

Documentation Process
Once a student has been accepted to the university, they will receive a packet of information including a form to fill out and return to the Disability Services Office requesting information on receiving disability accommodations at the university. Students should fill out their name and contact information and return it to the Disability Services Office to receive their packet of information. The packet contains an Intake Form that students should fill out as well as a release authorization. Both should be mailed to the Disability Services Office. This is the first step in accessing accommodations.

Once the Coordinator receives your intake form and disability documentation it will be reviewed as to whether or not it meets the documentation guidelines.

Intake Interview
Students should plan to meet with the Disability Services Coordinator in person or via telephone to discuss accommodations prior to classes starting. If interpreter services are needed, students should plan to notify the Disability Services Office two months in advance (or upon acceptance to the university) to locate interpreters for courses.

Using the documentation, the student and Coordinator of Disability Services will collaboratively determine the most appropriate academic adjustments and review implementation procedures. Faculty will be included as necessary to ensure that fundamental requirements of the course are not being altered.

**Interim Services**
If a student requests accommodations without having documentation of their disability at the time of the request, interim services may be provided if the student has received services at the K-12 level and the student has an IEP, or if they are a transfer student and have received services at a prior institution. Temporary accommodations may be allowed for 15-30 days to allow the student time to get the information needed. If the student does not provide documentation within that time frame, accommodations will be discontinued until the documentation is forthcoming. If a student is in the process of assessment and documentation of a disability, the student and the Coordinator of Disability services will work together to determine appropriate accommodations until the assessment is complete and documentation is available. If documentation is incomplete or does not meet eligibility requirements, accommodations will be discontinued.

**Temporary Medical Condition**
Students who have a medical condition that is temporarily disabling and who may need disability accommodations for a limited time should provide documentation of their condition to the Coordinator of Disability services and appropriate accommodations will be provided.

**Part Time Enrollment – Full Time Status for Health Insurance**
In some cases, a student may not have the ability to take full-time credits due to their disability. In this instance, a student who provides documentation from a qualified medical professional or evaluator that due to a medical/cognitive condition they are unable to take full time credits, may, upon review of the professional’s documenting report, be reported for health insurance purposes as a full-time status. Actual credit enrollment must be used for financial aid allocations. Full-time status will only be adjusted for health insurance purposes. Students must request this accommodation and provide documentation as required.

**6.2 Faculty Notification Letter**
A faculty notification letter will be filled out by the individual student and the Coordinator of Disability Services at the beginning of each semester to notify faculty that the students will be receiving the accommodations that are indicated. No student is to receive accommodations unless the faculty has been given the notification. It is the student’s responsibility to obtain the faculty notification letter from Disability Services within the first two weeks of the beginning of a class and deliver it to the instructor. Summer school notification to faculty must be made within the first three days of classes.
SECTION 7: STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 Student Rights
In college you (the student) are responsible for making sure that you are receiving the accommodations that you need. Two federal laws, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), are civil rights that can assist you in postsecondary education. These two laws guarantee the following student rights:

1. You have the right to equal access to postsecondary education, co-curricular programs, services, student employment opportunities, activities and facilities available at Bemidji State University as defined through the Center for Extended Learning for online students.
2. You have the right to appropriate effective accommodations, academic adjustments or auxiliary aids based on documented need.
3. You have the right to confidentiality of any information regarding your disability except as required by law or by signed consent to release information.

7.2 Responsibilities
Students with disabilities have the following responsibilities:

1. You have the responsibility to meet the University’s essential technical, academic and institutional standards with or without appropriate effective accommodations and follow the University’s Student Code of Conduct.
2. You have the responsibility to identify yourself as a student with a disability and request accommodations in a timely manner.
3. You have the responsibility to provide disability documentation from an appropriate professional source verifying the exact nature of the disability, current functional limitations and the qualifying rationale for recommended accommodations.
4. You have the responsibility to follow procedures for accessing appropriate effective accommodations, academic adjustments, or auxiliary aids as outlined in the Disability Services Policies and Procedures Manual.
5. You have the responsibility to stay in touch with the Coordinator of Disability Services to keep them apprised of the effectiveness and delivery of your accommodations.

SECTION 8: FACULTY RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
Several judicial decisions have ruled that faculty members may be held personally responsible for compliance with federal statutes and regulations such as ADA and Section 504. A decision in 1994 held “an individual may be subject to personal liability under the ADA” (Howe v. Hull, 873 F Supp. 72.77 N.D. Ohio 1994). The court outlined the circumstances in the judgment as: “(a) where he or she has a position of authority; (b) he or she has both the power and discretion to perform potentially discriminatory acts, and (c) the discriminatory acts are the result of the
exercise of the individual’s own discretion, as opposed to the implementation of institutional policy or the mandates of superiors.”

One of the roles of the Disability Services Coordinator is to support faculty in the provision of academic accommodations and by keeping faculty advised of their responsibilities and their rights.

### 8.1 Faculty Rights

Faculty have the following rights:

1. Faculty have the right to request a written agreement before allowing a student to tape record their class.
2. Faculty have a right to expect that all students will adhere to the Student Code of Conduct whether or not they have a documented disability. Students not following the conduct code should be reported to the Director of Student Life and Counseling. If the student has been identified as an individual with a documented disability this information should also be reported to the Disability Services Coordinator to facilitate collaboration of services.
3. Faculty have the right to challenge an accommodation request if they believe that the student is not qualified, if the requested accommodation would result in a fundamental alteration of the program (course), if Bemidji State University is being asked to address a personal need of the student or if the accommodation would impose an undue financial burden or hardship.
4. Accommodations requests are based on documentation of a student’s disability on file in the Disability Services Office due to confidentiality. The exact nature of a disability may not be disclosed to anyone, including faculty, without the express written permission of the individual student.
5. Faculty have the right to provide alternative testing accommodations within their individual departments when they have the ability to guarantee the needs of the individual student, (i.e. quiet, uninterrupted area, extended test time, etc.).

### 8.2 Faculty Responsibilities

Faculty have the following responsibilities:

1. Faculty have a shared responsibility with the Disability Services Office in the provision of accommodations for students with a documented disability. Bemidji State University is required to comply with state and federal statutes; and faculty, as employees of the institution, are required to adhere to the policies and procedures for implementation set forth by the University. The responsibility for meeting the academic needs of students with documented disabilities through appropriate accommodations has been assigned to the Disability Services Coordinator.
2. Faculty have the responsibility to refer a student to the Disability Services Office if the student presents medical documentation to the instructor. If an instructor notices that a student is not performing up to their ability and suspects this may be due to some type of disability, they have the responsibility to refer the student to the Disability Services Office.
3. Faculty have the responsibility to require students to provide proof of a documented disability and the nature of the accommodations they need from the Disability Services Office. If faculty have additional recommendations for accommodations that they believe will benefit the student, or a more appropriate accommodation than the one requested, they are encouraged to contact the Disability Services Office.

4. Faculty have a responsibility to follow the prescribed accommodations in a fair, non-judgmental and timely manner.

5. Faculty have the responsibility of maintaining the student’s right to privacy concerning the disability and any accommodations.

6. Faculty are responsible for providing information on their syllabus regarding disability accommodations. The recommended ADA tagline for syllabus is: “upon request this document can be made available in alternate formats. Please contact___________ (your department name and phone number) for assistance. For TTY communications contact the Minnesota Relay Service at (612) 297-5252 or 1-800-627-8529 and ask them to contact us at ___________ (your department name and phone number.) In addition faculty should include an Accommodation Statement in each syllabus: “Any student with a documented need for accommodations is requested to provide a faculty notification form from the Disability Services Office within the first three weeks of the semester.”

SECTION 9: BEMIDJI STATE UNIVERSITY DISABILITIES SERVICES RESPONSIBILITY

Bemidji State University has the following responsibilities:

1. Bemidji State University has the responsibility to ensure that the institution’s academic standards are maintained.

2. Bemidji State University has the responsibility to require disability documentation to verify a student’s eligibility for disability accommodations, academic adjustments or auxiliary aids.

3. Bemidji State University has the responsibility to clarify a student’s diagnosis(es) and eligibility for disability services with the diagnosing professional if necessary, upon receiving signed consent to do so.

4. Bemidji State University has the responsibility to deny requests for disability accommodations or academic adjustments of auxiliary aids when the disability documentation provided by the student does not identify a specific disability, fails to establish a current and essential need for the requested academic accommodation(s) or the request for accommodations/the disability documentation is not presented in a timely manner.

5. Bemidji State University has the responsibility to select from equally effective accommodations, academic adjustment or auxiliary aids in consultation with the student and course faculty.

6. Bemidji State University has the responsibility to deny requests for accommodations or academic adjustments based on disability documentation that is inappropriate or unreasonable including those that pose a direct threat to the health and safety of
others, that would constitute a substantial change or alteration of an essential course or program element or standard or would pose an undue hardship on the university.

SECTION 10: GRIEVANCE/APPEAL PROCEDURES

10.1 Grievance – Internal
If a student has an issue regarding an accommodation, it is the student’s responsibility to contact the Coordinator of Disability Services in a timely manner.

In cases where faculty or staff challenge an accommodation on the basis that the particular accommodation will alter the essential elements of an academic course, program or activity; the faculty member will be responsible for contacting the Coordinator of Disability Services.

When a request for an academic accommodation, made to the Coordinator of Disability Services, is denied on the basis of inadequate documentation, additional documentation will be requested to reevaluate reasonable and appropriate accommodations. The student has the financial responsibility for providing additional documentation.

The Coordinator of Disability Services will work with students and faculty to resolve any disagreement regarding academic accommodations and will communicate the resolution to the student verbally or in writing. Faculty will be provided with a faculty notification form indicating the appropriate accommodation.

If faculty, staff or students are not satisfied with the outcome of the resolution they may appeal to the Coordinator of Disability Services. If the Coordinator of Disability Services is unable to resolve the matter, it will be reported to the Vice-President of Student Development and Enrollment. Together they will review the information and determine a resolution. If this resolution does not produce agreement, the matter will be referred to the 504/ADA Compliance Officer for resolution.

10.2 Grievance – External/OCR Complaints
If the resolution is still unsatisfactory, the student will be referred to the US Department of Education Office of Civil Rights if they feel they have been denied access to, or the benefit of any University academic program or activity. (Grievance procedures adapted from Southwest Minnesota State University).

SECTION 11: REFERENCES

AHEAD Guidelines for Documentation of a Learning Disability in Adolescents and Adults (July 1997). The Association on Higher Education and Disability, Columbus, OH.
