

Office of Accessibility Services

Procedures and Guidelines for Student Accommodations

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Office of Accessibility Services James A. Bowser Building Suite 121/757-823-8325/ oasis@nsu.edu

INTRODUCTION

Norfolk State University (University) believes that students with a disability represent a form of diversity that enriches and strengthens the excellence of our institution. The University, therefore, seeks to promote a culture of access and inclusion for students with disabilities for all University programs and activities.

On behalf of the University, the primary role of the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) is to ensure access and inclusion for students with disabilities through the approval of academic and other accommodations, as well as through educational outreach and training for the University community.

The University's efforts are guided by applicable state and federal law, including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended (ADA), the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008, as well as guidance from the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights.

Eligibility for Accessibility Services

OAS facilitates the provision of approved academic accommodations for University students with a disability who are determined to meet the academic and/or technical standards requisite for admission and continued participation in a University program or activity.

While these Procedures and Guidelines focus on academic accommodations, they also apply to accommodations a student with a disability may need to participate in non-academic University programs and activities, such as participation in athletics or another University process.

Students who are employed by the University and seeking workplace accommodations should do so through NSU Human Resources.

Confidentiality

Students with disabilities are admitted to the university under the same requirements and process as other students. A student's decision to disclose their disability during the admissions process, or at any point during their university enrollment, is voluntary. If a student discloses this information only to OAS during the admissions process prior to being admitted, OAS will not share this information with the University's admission office.

However, post-enrollment, in order to qualify for accommodations, a student must self-identify with a disability and submit appropriate documentation to OAS in accordance with these Procedures and Guidelines. Documentation submitted to OAS is considered an educational record, as defined under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). It is kept confidential and separate from the student's general academic file unless the student chooses to also submit it to another University department. OAS will release information related to a disability only with the permission of the student, as permitted by FERPA, or as necessary to coordinate with other University offices to facilitate an accommodation or the accommodation process. OAS advises instructors that disability matters are confidential and should not be shared with others, and that academic accommodations should be handled in a discreet manner.

Disclosure of Accessibility

Students who wish to receive Accessibility accommodations and services are encouraged to initially disclose their disability status directly to OAS.

Students need not disclose the specific nature of their disability to their instructor, nor does OAS advise the instructor to inquire about a potential disability. Students are advised against sharing documentation of their disability directly with their instructor, as instructors are not responsible for interpreting, evaluating, or responding to disability documentation.

When the student discloses their disability status to their instructor rather than OAS, instructors should immediately refer the student to OAS to determine the student's eligibility to receive accommodations.

ACCESSIBILITY ACCOMMODATIONS AND SERVICES

Process for Students to Request Accommodations

Should a University student wish to receive accommodations for a disability in a course or other University program or activity, students are encouraged to apply for OAS services as soon as possible and submit appropriate documentation to begin the intake and eligibility process. The steps of this process are outlined below:

Application for OAS Services

Students may apply for services through the online application (URL: https://counseling.nsu.edu/TitaniumWeb/Hwc/DataForms/Enter-Data/OASIS1), or by calling the OAS office at 757-823-8325. Depending on the time in the semester, the intake and eligibility process can take up to two to three weeks.

The official means of communication with the University is email, so students must check their email for information about the status of their application with OAS.

Please note that requesting accommodations as soon as possible is imperative for two reasons: (1) if sufficient lead time is not provided, OAS may be limited in its ability to secure certain types of accommodations when needed; and (2) the University is not required to provide retroactive academic accommodations, i.e., accommodations for coursework, quizzes, exams, assignments, etc. that the student already completed before requesting accommodations through OAS.

Submission of Documentation and Eligibility Determination

Many disabilities require documentation from an appropriate health care provider to be eligible for services. Accommodation decisions are based upon a student's current functioning, which means that students must provide documentation that will permit OAS to determine what accommodations are appropriate. Students must provide documentation that includes the diagnosis, functional limitations related to the disability, severity level, duration, and any medication side effects that limit a major life activity.

OAS will accept the NSU OAS Verification of Disability form in most cases. However, OAS

reserves the right to refuse documentation in some cases, e.g., documentation that is submitted by a health care provider that has not treated the student or from a family member. OAS will notify the student in writing of its reasons for refusing such documentation.

OAS also may request additional information from the student if it believes that the documentation is not sufficient to establish a disability, as defined by Section 504 and ADA. In such cases, OAS will explain what additional documentation is necessary. Please note that while Individual Education Plans (IEP) or Section 504 Plans that a student had while in high school may have helpful information, such documentation may not be sufficient to stand alone to establish eligibility for disability services or accommodations.

If OAS determines that the student is not eligible to receive disability accommodations due to the documentation provided the student would be asked to provide additional documentation. Typically, OAS will contact the physician/therapist directly for clarity.

Intake/Eligibility Appointment

Once OAS receives the appropriate documentation from the student, the OAS Coordinator is asked to schedule an appointment within 48hours to begin the interactive process to determine appropriate accommodations.

Please note each semester (fall & spring; & summer) students are strongly encouraged to request services and accommodation, through their OAS Coordinator, prior to the start of each session. Advanced notice is necessary, depending on the nature of the accommodations. We recommend that students reach out to the OAS office at least 45 days prior to classes beginning (or upon onset of disability) by providing their class schedule. This is true even if they are requesting the same services and accommodation, because each semester courses, professors and classrooms change. Not all course requirements or settings are the same and may require adjustments to the approved accommodation.

Submission of Class Schedule

The student must provide a current copy of their class schedule including faculty names for each course to OAS. The student may submit their class schedule by email to their OAS Advisor or bring a copy with them to the intake/eligibility appointment.

5. Evaluation and Approval of Requested Accommodations by OAS

OAS will collaborate with the student, instructor, and as necessary when determining the appropriateness of the requested accommodations. Please note that the interactive process may be necessary even when the student has previously received accommodation, as accommodations that are appropriate in one course or environment may not be in another.

In reviewing accommodation requests, OAS analyzes the following factors to determine if the request is appropriate: * OAS prefers an in-person interaction part of process.

 The accommodation does not fundamentally alter the nature of the course, program, or activity. • The accommodation does not lower academic standards or fundamentally alter the nature of the course, program, or activity.

Alternative Testing

Please see the section on Accommodated Exams for more information. Further, the following non-exhaustive list provides examples of accommodations that may be appropriate for a student with a disability related to exams:

- Extra time on exams: e.g., 1.5x (time-and-a-half) or 2x (double time).
- Reduced-distraction testing environment: while there is no such thing as a
 "distraction-free" testing environment, there is reduced-distraction. These rooms
 include fewer sensory distractions and a smaller setting than most classrooms. A
 setting such as a busy hallway is not considered reduced distraction, whereas an
 adjacent empty and quiet classroom or office could be. Students should
 anticipate a reasonable amount of noise or movement in any environment.
- **Private room on Grounds:** a limited number of private testing rooms are available in OAS, and are reserved on a first-come, first-serve basis.
- Use of assistive technology for exams: such as voice-dictation software, text-to-speech, screen magnification, etc.
- **Use of computer for exams:** this typically would be to allow for a word processing program for essays, but could also be added due to the use of assistive technology.
- Specialized furniture: such as an adjustable table in LAB
- Alternative to using "bubble sheet" exams: such as an option to directly mark answers on the exam paper.
- **Scribe or reader:** an individual approved by OAS will write or read the exam to the student. Note: The student should arrange this accommodation well in advance (i.e., at least ten business days before the scheduled exam) to ensure that OAS has someone available to serve as a scribe or reader.
- Exam rescheduling: due to the nature of their condition, some students may not be able to anticipate when they experience a flare-up. They are expected to notify OAS immediately so that one might notify the instructor and/or OAS as possible when rescheduling is necessary. It is typically recommended that they take the exam within a reasonable amount of time, such as within 1-5 business days.
- Limit of only one final per day.

Student and instructor Requirements for Exam Related Accommodations

Students:

 Completion of Online Testing Request: Before OAS can proctor an exam, the student is strongly encouraged to complete a Test Request that informs OAS of the specific test instructions for that course.

Important points to know about testing request:

- a. The Testing Request must be completed and submitted, per test; the testing request will be applied to all students with disabilities who receive alternative testing accommodations in that course.
- b. OAS will follow the instructions on the testing request unless the instructor notifies OAS otherwise in writing (e.g., through an email).
- c. Students and instructors must abide by the terms of the online testing request.
- **2. Submission of request to OAS:** Students must go to OASIS website to complete online

test and sign up to take their exams at least **48 hours (2 days) business days** prior to

the scheduled exam time to permit OAS sufficient administrative time to coordinate accommodations. If the request is not made within a reasonable time frame, OAS may

not be able to coordinate the accommodation, and the student would need to make alternative arrangements directly with the instructor. Instructors are not allowed to sign

up on behalf of the student. Students are expected to take the exam at the same time

as their classmates, unless the exam occurs outside of OAS operating hours, or alternative arrangements have been agreed upon between the student and instructor.

Instructors:

When an instructor receives an OAS Letter of Accommodation indicating that a student has been approved to receive exam-related accommodations that cannot be implemented during the traditional exam time and location for all students, there are a number of ways in which instructors can implement this accommodation:

- Reserve a classroom or office for students with accommodated testing.
- Request that the student take the exam at OAS. (See section on Testing Request above).

Classroom Access

• Classroom relocation: in some cases, the University is able to change the location of classrooms to ensure access to a course for a student with a disability. When this is not possible, the University will explore other ways to ensure the student's access to the course.

- Accessible furniture: examples include placement of an adjustable table, accessible seating, etc.
- **Preferential seating:** appropriate seating in different areas of the classroom based on the specifics needs of the student.

Modification of Course Attendance and/or Modification of Course Deadlines

Students are expected to follow the attendance policy and deadlines established by the instructor for each course. When students have a disability with unpredictable and episodic medical episodes that may require them to miss class or deadlines, an accommodation in the form of a reasonable amount of flexibility with absences, deadlines, and participation points may be necessary. Students with such conditions must keep OAS updated about changes to their disability that may impact attendance. Important additional information about requirements for students who are approved for this type of accommodation is set forth below.

• Reasonable modification of course attendance: Regarding absences, OAS will meet with an instructor at the beginning of each semester regarding the appropriate number of absences allowed by the University, as well as a contingency plan for the student to make up missed work and tests/exams without penalty in the event of a disability-related absence. OAS should be contacted immediately to facilitate a decision, which will be documented as an amendment to the OAS Letter of Accommodation for that course. OAS will then notify the student of all details pertaining to that class, regarding attendance.

For this purpose, reasonable means that it does not result in a fundamental alteration of the essential nature of the course, such as the course's design or learning outcomes the essential

• Reasonable modification of course deadlines: This accommodation applies to outside class assignments and is not intended to serve as an accommodation for open-ended, indefinite deadlines. It is intended to be used sparingly. OAS will determine how many days extension, based on documentation. Once the timeline for the deadline modification has been determined, students should adhere to the agreed-upon plan and submit the course work within the deadline modification. Please note, requests for deadline extensions for reasons other than those related to disability are not supported by this accommodation. For questions about this accommodation, please contact the OAS immediately to facilitate a timely agreement on an appropriate accommodation decision.

Student and Instructor Requirements for Reasonable Modification of Attendance or Deadline Modifications

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- Only use this accommodation for disability-related reasons. This accommodation
 does not apply to absences or missed exams/deadlines/participation points due
 to common illnesses, personal conflicts or other non-disability related reasons.
- Maintain prompt and regular communication with your instructors about your disability-related absences or anticipating missing an exam or1 deadline. You must inform your instructors of absences and missed exams/deadlines in advance or as soon as possible, typically within 24 hours. If a student does not provide prompt communication, that absence/exam/assignment may not qualify for the attendance accommodation and therefore may not be modified.
- Adhere to the course syllabus and the University's established academic policies.
- Submit your requests in a timely manner. Like all other accommodations, this accommodation cannot be retroactive and, therefore, would not apply to absences, late assignments, or lost participation points prior to implementation of the accommodation; therefore, timely requests are imperative.

Instructors:

- If attendance is intrinsic to the nature of the course, instructors should contact OAS as soon as possible upon receiving a Letter of Accommodation with an attendance modification. Instructors are not expected to alter course outcomes. In consultation with the instructor, department chair, or dean, OAS will determine if attendance is an essential element of the course by considering course description, syllabus, methods of grading, learning objectives, external licensure requirements, the impact on the educational experience of the entire class, and other factors.
- When students with the attendance modification accommodation miss class for a disability-related reason, instructors should count the absence as excused, and reasonable deadline extensions or makeup assignments should be given.
- If absences become excessive or if concerns arise, instructors should contact OAS.

NOTE: The attendance and deadline modification accommodations are not intended to replace the University's established procedure for receiving a grade of Incomplete.

Permission to Record and Notetaking Services

 Permission to record classes: NSU precludes the recording of class lectures without explicit approval. One of the exceptions to this policy includes students who have been approved to record lectures through OAS. • Peer notetaking services: Student who are unable to take their own lecture notes may be approved to receive a copy of the notes from one of their class peers. Students must request the classes for which they require notes every semester. OAS requests that instructors make an announcement at the start of the semester for a course regarding the need for a notetaker without identifying the student. Students note sharing may also identify to OAS or the instructor another student in their class to be a note sharer. Students should contact OAS if the notes have not been received in a timely manner or the notes are inadequate. NOTE: Students are expected to comply with the course attendance policy as notetaking assistance is not a substitute for attending class.

Notetaker/Note Sharer Responsibilities:

- Once approved to work as a notetaker, the student must email a copy of their notes to <u>oasis@nsu.edu</u>, or to the student directly with <u>oasis@nsu.edu</u> copied in, within 24 hours notes to student to study of the course during the duration of the semester. What do notetakers do with notes?
- Notetakers must take notes that are legible and thorough, and notes should include key information from the chalk/white board, about course or homework assignments, quizzes, and exams.
- Notetakers must provide notes for each class session unless a class session is canceled, and the notes should be representative of the entire class session, from the beginning to the end of the class. If a notetaker is absent for any class, it is their responsibility to find a substitute note-taker and/or to otherwise ensure notes are provided.

Housing

OAS receives requests, reviews documentation, and works with University Housing & Residence Life (HRL) to facilitate accommodations for students with disabilities who have specific needs, such as wheelchair accessibility, modified safety alarms, kitchen access or access to specific dining halls, single room, a service animal or assistance animal. Other examples of accommodations may include access to air-conditioned rooms, accessible kitchens, access to a residence with an elevator, etc. Disability-related needs will take priority over specific residence hall and/or roommate requests. For instance, single rooms are not available in all residence halls.

In addition to submitting the housing application to HRL, students must submit a Student Request for Housing Modification form to OAS. The student's treating health care provider will also need to complete a Verification of Disability form and submit it to OAS. All three items need to be completed by the application deadline listed on OAS's website. OAS may request that students provide current medical documentation of their condition and/or need each year, even if the student received housing accommodations during the previous year.

It is important to note that priority will go to students who submit the housing accommodation forms by the published deadlines. Please see OAS's website for more information.

D/deaf and Hard of Hearing Services

The following is a non-exhaustive list of D/deaf and hard of hearing services available to students through OAS at no cost to them:

- ASL English interpretation services: students whose primary language is ASL may request interpreters to fully engage with the programs and services of the University.
- Captioning of audio and visual materials: OAS can assist with the process of
 captioning all audio and/or visual materials, but ideally this is coordinated as a
 team between OAS, the student, and the instructor. OAS will need access to
 these files, and at least five days' lead time to get the file captioned and returned
 to the student and/or instructor.
- Communication Access Real-time Translation (CART): this is also known as real-time captions. This could include either in-person or remote services, but either way would provide real-time captions for a student for their classes, student group meetings, etc.
- Assistive listening devices: student can check out equipment such as an FM system, Roger pen, etc., on loan from OAS.

Other Accommodations

Below is a non-exhaustive list or other accommodation that maybe available:

- Priority registration
- Reduced course load
- Meal plan adjustment
- Parking permit authorization
- Service Animals: service animals are not pets, but rather are animals that perform certain actions or tasks for a person with a disability. The action or task may include visible tasks, such as opening doors or retrieving items for the handler, or their actions may include alerting the handler to a drop in blood sugar or an imminent seizure. It is important to note that Service Animals are not comfort or therapy animals. Service animals are allowed anywhere on grounds as outlined in the Guidelines for Service and Assistance Animals on University Property; however, service animals are expected to adhere to behavioral expectations to remain on
- Assistance Animals: (Only in Housing), assistance animals or emotional support animals, provide emotional support that alleviates one or more identified symptoms or effects of a person's disability. Assistance animals are only in Housing allowed in on-grounds housing under the Fair Housing Act. Requests for

permission to reside with an Assistance Animal must be made through the normal housing accommodation request process.

ROLES AND RESPONDSIBILITIES IN THE STUDENT ACCOMMODATION PROCESS

Office of Accessibility Services

- Actively foster inclusion of students with disabilities as a positive and integral part
 of the University's spectrum of diversity.
- Upon receipt of a request for accommodations, timely engage in an interactive process with the student, and instructor as necessary, to identify appropriate accommodations.
- Require appropriate, professional documentation necessary to demonstrate the nature and extent of the functional limitations caused by a disability and seek additional documentation and clarification if such documentation is not provided.
- Engage in a deliberative process with instructors, departments, and other necessary University officials when deciding whether an accommodation fundamentally alters an essential element of the course, program, or activity at the University and in identifying alternative accommodations.
- Approve accommodations in a timely manner for students with disabilities and provide them with a Letter of Accommodation to be provided to their instructor(s).
- Deny a request for accommodations for reasons such as failure to submit required documentation or where the documentation does not indicate that the accommodation is necessary.
- Deny a request for an accommodation that would fundamentally alter an essential element of a course, program, or activity at the University.
- Provide information regarding procedures and guidance to students with disabilities in a timely manner and in a reasonably accessible format.
- Ensure confidentiality of all information pertaining to a student's disability, including communications and records, as defined under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Students

- Meet the University's academic and technical standards for ongoing participation in University programs and activities, with or without accommodation.
- Timely disclose to OAS that you are a student with a disability-and follow these Procedures and Guidelines-if you wish to receive accommodation
- Provide documentation requested by OAS to document the nature of your disability, related functional limitations, and the need for specific requested accommodations.

- Engage with OAS in an interactive process to identify appropriate accommodations
- Recognize that the eligibility determination process must be completed before OAS approves accommodations
- Timely request accommodations for each course for which they are needed preferably prior to the start of each semester.
- Timely provide instructors with your OAS Letter of Accommodation. Immediately notify OAS if you encounter any difficulty with obtaining your approved accommodations in the course or program or if the approved accommodations are not effective.
- If requesting housing accommodations (including requests for a service or assistance animal), must submit the housing application (and other forms what are the other forms? Student Request for Housing Modification form, and Verification of Disability) form by the application deadline listed on OAS website.

Instructors

- Consider equal access issues for students with disabilities when establishing academic courses, course requirements, and teaching methods.
- Set the academic standards and learning outcomes for the course(s) you teach.
- Engage in an interactive process with OAS and the student as necessary to identify appropriate accommodations.
- Engage in a deliberative process with OAS, your department, and other necessary University officials when deciding whether an accommodation fundamentally alters an essential element of the course, program, or activity at the University. If appropriate, instructors should also participate in this process to identify alternative accommodations.
- Timely provide only those accommodations listed as approved in the OAS Letter
 of Accommodation provided to you by the student. Contact OAS if you and/or the
 student wish to modify the approved accommodations for any reason.
- Expect all students, regardless of disability, to abide by the University's Standards of Conduct.
- Assure the confidentiality of all disability-related information, as defined under FERPA.
- Immediately refer students who identify themselves as having a disability to OAS.
- Comply with these Procedures and Guidelines.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Students are encouraged to discuss their concerns with their OAS Advisor, who will attempt to resolve the issues by assisting the student, e.g., by discussing issues or concerns with the instructor, department or program.

Students are not required to report concerns to the individual who is believed to be responsible for the denial of equal opportunity, discrimination, or harassment.

Informal Complaint Procedure with OAS

To file an informal complaint related to academic accommodations with OAS, students should submit the following information in writing to the Director of OAS:

- Name, address, contact information of complainant
- Dates) of alleged incident
- Parties involved
- Witnesses (if applicable)
- Specific description of allegation(s) of discrimination and impact of alleged incident on the learning environment at the University

OAS will review all informal complaints within ten (10) business days.

Students are encouraged to participate in the informal complaint process in order to timely and efficiently resolve their concerns. However, participation in the process is voluntary, and students are not required to submit an informal complaint to the Director of OAS before seeking assistance from the University's ADA Coordinator, or resolution with the University's Office for Access and Equal Opportunity or the state or federal agency authorized to accept complaints. Moreover, students are never required to submit a complaint to any individual who they believe to have engaged in discrimination or · harassment based on disability or any other protected characteristic.

The following person at the University has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Rehabilitation Act, and related statutes and regulations:

Brianna Williams,
ADA Coordinator

Office for Access and Equal Opportunity
700 Park Avenue

Woods Science Building, Room 137

Norfolk, VA 23504

(757) 278-4123

equity@nsu.edu

The ADA Coordinator is available to students and OAS for consultation and assistance with the resolution of disability-related issues and concerns.

Alternative or Formal Resolution with the University's Office for Access and Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights (EOCR)

The University's Office for Equal Opportunity and Civil Rights (EOCR) is responsible for ensuring compliance with the University's Notice of Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity Statement and the University's Equal Opportunity Policy which prohibits discrimination and harassment based on disability. Examples of alleged discrimination involving students with disabilities include failure to provide agreed upon accommodations or failure to engage in the interactive process resulting in denial of an accommodation.

Students may seek alternative or formal resolution with the University's Office for Access and Equal Opportunity. To initiate a request for resolution under the Office for Access and Equal Opportunity Complaint Procedures, please contact the Office for Access and Equal Opportunity at (757) 278-4012 orequity@nsu.edu.

(The NSU BOV Policy # 05.02 (2016) Preventing and Addressing Discrimination and Harassment is no longer on our policy website.) The University prohibits retaliation against individuals who complain of discrimination or harassment in violation of the PADH Policy, or who assist or participate in the process to resolve such complaints. See University policy HRM-010: Preventing and Addressing Retaliation for additional information.

Office for Civil Rights

Any person has the right to file a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education. To file a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights, please contact:

Any person has the right to file a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education. To file a complaint with the Office for Civil Rights, please contact:

U.S. Department of Education
Office for Civil Rights (Metro Office)
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20202-1475
Telephone: (202) 453-6020
Email: OCR.DC@ed.gov

KEY DEFINITIONS

OAS lists key definitions below to aid individuals in understanding these Procedures and Guidelines:

- **Accommodations:** academic adjustments and auxiliary aids and services that are necessary to afford students with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in the University's programs and activities.
- **Disability:** a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.
- **Physical impairment:** any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of a body systems, e.g., neurological, musculoskeletal, respiratory, cardiovascular, reproductive, digestive, skin, and endocrine.
- Mental impairment: a mental or psychological disorder, such as intellectual disability, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities.
- Major life activities: functions including, but not limited, to learning, caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, and working, eating, sleeping, standing, lifting, bending, reading, concentrating, thinking, and communicating. These are examples and not an exhaustive list.
- **Temporary impairment:** an impairment that is episodic or in remission and may constitute a disability under these Procedures and Guidelines if the impairment would substantially limit a major life activity when active for an extended period of time. The issue of whether a temporary impairment is substantial enough to be a disability is addressed by OAS on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration both the duration (or expected duration) of the impairment and the extent to which it actually limits a major life activity.

Effective date: XX/XX/XX