

DISABILITY RESOURCE AND ACCESS

Procedure 0006

Documentation Guidelines

Purpose: Students served by the DRA are required to have documented disabilities which impair one or more major life functions as outlined under the guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The student's case file should contain documentation from a professional in the field of the student's disability unless the disability is visible or otherwise self evident. In order to understand the minimum qualifications for what consists of documentation, and to establish time lines for documentation, the following procedures are established according to disability category.

Procedure: In order to provide any DRA services, the student's case file must contain documentation to support that the student is a qualified individual with a disability unless the disability is visible or otherwise self evident. Depending on the nature of the documentation, it may need to be updated over time.

If the student has more than one disabling condition, documentation for one disability may be sufficient to provide services and accommodations. If, however, all requested services can not be supported from documentation of a single disability, then documentation may be required from a professional in the field of each disability.

Documentation under ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act: A qualified student with disability is defined as having a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more life activities (as defined by ADA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, current case law and OCR directives). In the absence of a visible disability or otherwise self evident disability, a health care professional in the field of the student's disability **should initially establish such a disability** using a DSM-IV code (when appropriate) and signing the diagnosis. The report should address limitations, including results from testing, and indicate whether the disability will change over time.

ADA also defines an individual as having a disability who has "a record of such an impairment." Such records may include records from public or private schools, service agencies and others who show a history of services for an impairment, even if no original/initial documentation exists. ADA also defines an individual as having a disability who "is regarded as having such an impairment." Students in wheelchairs or those having obvious impairments may come under this designation. ADA eligibility under these two exceptions, must be approved by the DRA Coordinator.

Psychological: A psychological disability must be documented by a report from a licensed PhD or psychiatrist who can give a DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual) diagnosis. In addition to

the DSM diagnosis, the report should indicate any tests that were given and the results of such tests. The report should also contain a description of the disability.

Disabilities identified under the psychological category:

Psychiatric Disability

Emotional Disabilities

Physical Disabilities: Documentation of a physical disability should be documented by a health care professional, preferably with experience in the area of the disability (i.e.: a bone doctor speaking about an orthopedic disability, audiologist report on hearing loss, etc.). The report should indicate functional limitations, such as lifting restrictions, walking limitations, among others and identify any reasonable accommodation needed by the student.

Disabilities identified under this category, include but are not limited to:

Blind/Low Vision

Deaf/Hard of Hearing

Head Injury

Orthopedic Disability

Cerebral Palsy

Epilepsy

Muscular Dystrophy

Multiple Sclerosis

Heart Disease

Cancer

Diabetes

HIV Disease

Tuberculosis

Drug Addiction/Alcoholism

Learning Disabilities, including ADHD and related disabilities: Documentation of a Learning Disability or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder should include complete copies of tests that comply with the DSM-IV diagnosis of these disabilities (i.e. Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery and Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale, or Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children). It is recommended that these tests be recent or no more than three years old. In the event that a person was diagnosed with a Learning Disability or ADHD while in school, copies of IEP reports may be viewed as supporting documents, but an original diagnosis, signed by a qualifying professional should be obtained. A student will be provided accommodations when an original diagnosis is over three years old and there is adequate supporting information showing an ongoing disability and services (i.e. IEPs, three-year updates, and/or an addendum from a school psychologist).

Disabilities identified under this category, include but not limited to:

Intellectual Disability

Mental Retardation

Learning Disability

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Additional Procedures:

For Visible Disabilities: A visible disability is one apparent to the untrained eye. The advisor is required to identify the disability in the case file. Services shall be provided immediately, with the approval of the Coordinator, but a request for additional

information to support service delivery may be made if the disability-related need for the requested services is not readily apparent or known.

For Verbal Documentation: (Provided over the phone by qualified professional, etc. who indicates that written confirmation is in process) the advisor is required to write down the information provided to include the name of the provider, his/her credentials, and the date. Service delivery may be provided immediately, with approval of the Coordinator, but written documentation must be pursued until provided.

Information Release Forms: It is the responsibility of the student to provide documentation. All requests to provide information to the DRA must come from the student. DRA must obtain and have on file an “Information Release Form” which authorizes NPC to have and discuss such information with designated individuals and organizations. DRA can assist with the process of obtaining documentation by providing sample requests to release information forms which students can use to model their own requests.