

GENERAL POLICY ON STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

POLICY NO. 180-012

SCOPE

APPROVAL Academic Programme Committee

ORIGINAL DATE

LAST REVISION November 8, 2004

NEXT REVISION

CONTACT Director of Financial Aid and Student Counselling / Disability Resource Facilitator

1 GENERAL POLICY

NSCAD University understands that individuals with a disability may have different ways of working within an academic environment, but that their ultimate performance is not inferior simply because it is achieved by different means. The institution is, therefore, committed to the goal of providing equal opportunities within its programs to academically qualified students with disabilities, and will not limit admission to the university on this basis. Rather, NSCAD offers admission on the basis of evidence of reasonable maturity in the prospective student, interest in working with the university's programs and ability to benefit from the university's offerings. NSCAD also recognizes, subject to its financial and other resource constraints, and without compromising academic standards, that a student who is academically qualified, and who has been admitted to the university on the basis of these qualifications, has the right to:

1. Access to all educational programs.
2. Access to all learning environments.
3. Access to all institutional facilities and services.
4. Assistance that is individualized according to the student's disability and needs, to legitimate academic requirements, and to the NSCAD's capacity to respond.

To provide this access and assistance, NSCAD is responsible for:

1. Informing the university community about available services.
2. Providing support services, subject to reasonable financial and resource limitations.
3. Promoting an attitude of respect for an individual with a disability.
4. Providing accommodations that are particular to the disability of the student.
5. Implementing this policy through all members of the university community, including faculty, administration, staff and students.

To obtain this access and assistance the student is responsible for:

1. Initiating contact with NSCAD's Coordinator of Financial Aid and Student Counselling or Disability Resource Facilitator to make known the nature of the disability and related required Academic accommodations.
2. Providing the Coordinator of Financial Aid and Student Counselling or Disability Resource Facilitator with documentation of a disability.
3. Undertaking a reasonable measure of self-advocacy to ensure that s/he receives necessary and available accommodations.

2 POLICY ON STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

a. Policy on Learning Disabilities

NSCAD University is committed to providing accommodations for students with learning disabilities according to the University's 'General Policy on Students with Disabilities.' The Nova Scotia Human Rights Act defines a learning disability as a "dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language" (*Nova Scotia Human Rights Act*, October 18, 1991).

b. Procedures for Obtaining Accommodations in Relations to Learning Disabilities

1. After formal admission to the University, all students who have professionally diagnosed learning disabilities, and who wish the University to provide accommodation of these disabilities, must contact the Coordinator of Financial Aid and Student Counselling ("Coordinator") or the Disability Resource Facilitator (DRF).
2. The initial contact with the Coordinator or DRF should take place prior to the beginning of classes, but no later than the first two weeks of classes in Fall and Winter semesters and the first week of classes in Summer semesters.
3. A student must set up an appointment with the Coordinator or DRF to discuss her/his requests for accommodations.
4. A student must take a copy of a recent professional psycho-educational assessment ("assessment") of their learning disability to her/his first appointment with either the Coordinator or DRF.
5. "Recent" for the purpose of this policy is defined as an assessment that is three years old or less. A student without a recent assessment who wants to request accommodation of her/his disabilities must arrange to have an assessment of her/his disabilities done at her/his own cost. A pre-assessment of disabilities can be provided

by the Disabilities Counsellor at Dalhousie University. A list of local contacts where an assessment can be completed is available through NSCAD or Dalhousie.

6. A student unable or unwilling to undertake a recent assessment, but who still wishes to request accommodations must prepare a letter indicating the reason for the lack of a recent assessment. The student must bring this letter and any previous professional assessments to her/his first appointment with either the Coordinator or DRF. At this point, the need for a recent assessment will be considered based on the circumstances and other supporting documentation of the individual student.
7. The student will then work with the Coordinator or DRF to prepare a 'letter of accommodation' for each of the student's course instructors as applicable. This letter will list accommodation requests based on both the suggestions for accommodation in the psycho-educational assessments and the student's and Coordinator's/DRF's suggestions. At this time, the Coordinator/DRF will also provide a 'letter of agreement' for each of the student's course instructors (see attached 'letter of agreement'). The 'letter of agreement' lists the requested accommodations and provides spaces for the instructor and student to sign in agreement to these accommodations.
8. Students are responsible for taking a 'letter of accommodation' and a 'letter of agreement' to each course instructor. This should be done within the first two weeks of classes. If a student cannot obtain the 'accommodation letter' and 'letter of agreement' within the first two weeks of class, s/he should still meet with their instructors within the first two weeks of classes, discuss her/his requests and return as soon as possible with her/his letter and forms.
9. An instructor may refuse accommodations if s/he believes that such accommodations will prevent the student from working within the academic standards of the course.
10. Accommodations are not the only type of assistance offered to students with disabilities. Other types of support available through NSCAD include:
 - a. Training on assistive technology software and information on the location of assistive technology computers on NSCAD's campus.
 - b. Assistance with Canada Study Grants applications and applications for other forms of financial aid available to students with disabilities.
 - c. The services of a writing tutor (appointments made through the Secretary, Division of Historical and Critical Studies).

- d. Counselling information concerning workshops for academic problems and counselling services for psychological problems (through Dalhousie University).
- e. Assistance in securing note takers or tutors and help in obtaining and copying the notes if a note taker has been assigned by the instructor.

3 FUTURE POLICY REVISIONS

The Disabilities policy of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design is subject to revision as funding varies and as more information becomes available in the field of post-secondary studies, learning disabilities and Federal/Provincial legislation.

4 APPENDIX A – LETTER OF AGREEMENT

Letter of Agreement

In consultation with _____ I, _____
(name of student) (name of faculty member)

have agreed to make the following accommodations in _____ .
(name of course)

The agreement extends for the length of the course and is not binding to any future course or student. The agreement is based upon the Letter of Accommodations (attached) from the Coordinator of Financial Aid and Student Counselling, or the Disability Resource Facilitator, regarding the needs of the student named above.

Accommodations:

Student Responsibilities:

Signature of Faculty: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Student: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Coordinator
of Financial Aid & Student
Counselling, Or Disability

Resource Facilitator: _____ Date: _____

5 APPENDIX A – LETTER OF ACCOMMODATION

Letter of Accommodation

(Date)

Dear Professor _____:

(Name of student), a student enrolled in your (name of course) has a documented learning disability and will be receiving the services of the NSCAD's Coordinator of Financial Aid & Student Counselling, and the Disability Resource Facilitator.

Because of the nature of this disability, (Name of student) requires the following accommodations:

Please review these accommodations with (Name of student) and decide together which are agreeable and appropriate for your course. The accommodations should then be entered in the Agreement Form, and a copy of the completed Agreement Form should be sent to the Disability Resource Facilitator (located in Student Services).

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Disability Resource Facilitator

Tel: (902) 494-8313

Fax: (902) 425-2987