



# **Nicholls State University**

*Louisiana Center for Dyslexia and  
Related Learning Disorders*

*College Program*

*Policy and Procedures Manual*

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## **Mission Statement**

The mission of the Louisiana Center for Dyslexia and Related Learning Disorders is to transform the lives of individuals with dyslexia through the provision of support services to college students, educational evaluations to the public, and training opportunities to teachers and parents.

## **Contact Information / Hours of Operation**

163-166 Peltier

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The hours of operation are 8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Hours subject to change at discretion of university officials. The office is closed on all university holidays.

## **Introduction**

The Louisiana Center for Dyslexia and Related Learning Disorders serves the community and NSU students who have been identified as having characteristics of dyslexia and/or a related disorder. College students in all majors are provided support services. A comprehensive assessment is available for children, adolescents, and adults. Screening is available for children, age 4-6. Staff members also provide teacher training through in-service workshops, pre-service classes, and a summer camp.

The Louisiana Center for Dyslexia and Related Learning Disorders offers the following services through a college program for students with dyslexia and/or related learning disorders enrolled at Nicholls State University:

- **Assigned coordinator** - Students will be assigned a coordinator to assist with transitioning to college. All coordinators are trained in the field of dyslexia and have master's degree in their field of study.
- **Support system** – Students receive help integrating into the University and the Center.
- **Remediation** – Students receive specialized tutoring in English, math, history, government, business related courses, etc.
- **Academic planning** – Students receive assistance in scheduling and registration services.
- **Resources** – Students have access to computers with special technology to assist with class assignments.
- **Classroom and testing accommodations** – Students receive the classroom and testing accommodations for which they are eligible based on their evaluations.
- **Distraction limited environment** - Students receive a distraction-limited testing room for testing accommodations and a distraction-limited study room to complete class assignments.

## **College Program**

## **Governing Laws**

Nicholls State University is committed to providing equal education opportunities for persons with disabilities in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Amendment Act (ADAA) of 2008. The aforementioned laws protect individuals with disabilities from discrimination, allow access to all programs and services, and ensure equal access to education.

Dyslexia is one of several distinct learning disabilities. It is a specific language based disorder of constitutional origin characterized by difficulties in single word decoding, usually reflecting insufficient phonological processing abilities. These difficulties in single word decoding are often unexpected in relation to age and other cognitive and academic abilities; they are not a result of generalized developmental disability or sensory impairment. Dyslexia is manifested by variable difficulty with different forms of language, often including, in addition to problems in reading, a conspicuous problem with acquiring proficiency in writing and spelling.

Diagnostic categories:

- ADD is “a persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity – impulsivity that is more frequently displayed and more severe than is typically observed in individuals at a comparable level of development.”
- Learning Disorders  
A learning disability affects the way an individual processes and articulates information. It is called the invisible disability. Examples include, but are not limited to, auditory processing disorder, Dyslexia and Dysgraphia.

### **Transition from High School to College**

While governing laws apply to both school districts and postsecondary schools, responsibility of the postsecondary institution significantly changes as compared to high school. In high school, school personnel are responsible for identifying and implementing the need for accommodations for students with disabilities. In postsecondary education, the student with the disability must self-identify with the disability service provider.

It is the responsibility of the student to know and follow the postsecondary school’s procedures for requesting accommodations.

### **Registration Procedure**

The student should apply to Nicholls State University **AND** the Dyslexia Center. To be eligible for the college program offered by the Louisiana Center for Dyslexia and Related Learning Disorders, students must be accepted into Nicholls State University and have a current (within the past three years) psychological evaluation from a licensed professional documenting a diagnosis of dyslexia and/or related learning disorder. To apply to the Dyslexia Center, the student must complete the Center application and submit it with the application fee and the required documentation to the Dyslexia Center. All documents submitted in support of the application become the property of the Dyslexia Center and are neither returnable nor transferable. The \$25.00 application fee is nonrefundable. After receiving the application and fee, documentation will be reviewed for eligibility.

If the student qualifies for the Center, an interview appointment will be scheduled. After the interview, the Dyslexia Center Admission Committee meets to determine acceptance into the Dyslexia Center. If the student is accepted, an acceptance letter will be sent to the student at the address on the application. If the student is not accepted a denial letter will be sent to the student at the address on the application.

If the student does not qualify for the Center, a letter of explanation will be sent to the address on the application. If a student is being evaluated by the Dyslexia Center and the evaluation will not be finalized by the first class day of the semester, the student may be enrolled in the Dyslexia Center college program on a conditional basis if the Dyslexia Center evaluator states that the diagnosis will be dyslexia or a related learning disorder and the paperwork will be complete before the 14<sup>th</sup> class day.

### **Fee Procedure**

The Dyslexia Center charges a fee of \$525.00 per regular semester, which is automatically added to each student's tuition invoice. If a student wants to be enrolled in the Center for the summer session or intersession, a fee of \$325.00 is charged for the summer session and \$75.00 for intersession. Summer and intersession fees are not automatically added to a student's tuition invoice. The student must email the Center from his/her NSU email account requesting that the fee be added for summer or intersession. If a student chooses to cancel enrollment in the Dyslexia Center before paying fees, the student must e-mail the Center from his/her NSU e-mail account one week before NSU's fee deadline requesting that the fee be removed from the invoice. The fee is not refundable once the semester begins. If the student resigns from the university, the Center follows university policy for refunds. Students sign a fee procedure document acknowledging their understanding of this policy.

### **Documentation Guidelines**

While Section 504 plans or IEPs are useful in identifying a student's needs, it is not sufficient documentation for accommodations in postsecondary education. The following are the Dyslexia Center's documentation requirements:

#### **Documentation Requirements:**

Documentation submitted with the Application to the Dyslexia Center must:

1. Be completed by a licensed professional qualified to make the diagnosis.
2. Be typed on official letterhead and signed by the qualified licensed professional including licensing information.
3. Be completed within the past three years.
4. Clearly state a diagnosis of dyslexia and/or related learning disorder.
5. Include the screening tests and scores used to determine the diagnosis. The screening tests must include but are not limited to the following:
  - a. Measure(s) of general cognitive ability
  - b. Measure(s) of single word identification and phonological processing
  - c. Measure(s) of reading comprehension (preferably timed and untimed)
  - d. Measure(s) of written expression
6. Have verification of average or above average intellectual abilities.

7. Include complete educational, developmental and medical history relevant to the diagnosis.
8. Include a list of accommodations appropriate to college. Provided is a list of suggested college accommodations:
  - Extended time for tests and in class assignments
  - Reader for Tests
  - Use of Calculator
  - Use of Dictionary
  - Note-taker
  - Preferential Seating
  - Use of Computer
  - Provide Additional Directions
  - Provide List of Required Textbooks Early to Obtain Textbooks on Reading Software
  - Read Tests Orally
  - Distraction Limited Testing Room
  - Essay Read Back
  - Omit/Prorate Spelling
  - Avoid Scheduling Consecutive Testing Sessions
  - Test Questions Rephrased

### **Confidentiality**

The Dyslexia Center is committed to ensuring that all information and communication pertaining to a student's disability remains confidential as required by law. The following guidelines about the treatment of such information have been adopted by the Dyslexia Center and will be shared with students. These guidelines incorporate relevant state and federal regulations.

1. No one will have immediate access to student files in the Dyslexia Center except office personnel. Any information regarding a disability is considered confidential and will be shared only with others within the university who have a legitimate educational interest. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) protects this information.
2. If another university staff member has a legitimate educational interest and must access the student's psychological evaluation or documentation on file in the Dyslexia Center, the student must first give written permission to allow the university staff member access to the information. Dyslexia Center staff must document in the student's folder the date, time, name of the university staff member accessing the information, and the reason for the access.
3. Sensitive information in student files will not be released except in accordance with federal and state laws.
4. A student's file may be released pursuant to a court order or subpoena.
5. There may be occasions when the Center staff will share information regarding a student's disability at their discretion. Information will be shared only if it has been determined that there is an appropriate legitimate educational interest involved.
6. The Dyslexia Center compiles data for research purposes which students are required to sign a release form for participation.

7. If a student requests a copy of an evaluation in their records, the student will have to contact the original evaluator for documentation.
8. A student has the right to review his/her own file with reasonable notification.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Center staff, campus faculty/staff and students with a disability each have roles and responsibilities that are pertinent to ensuring equal access to education.

### **The Dyslexia Center Coordinators**

The Center coordinators are devoted to providing academic support, accommodations, advocacy and referrals for students with disabilities. Responsibilities include:

- Following Nicholls State University policies and procedures
- Following job duties outlined in job descriptions and evaluations.
- Reviewing students' documentation, evaluating eligibility, and identifying reasonable accommodations.
- Requesting additional documentation, if needed.
- Providing accommodation letters to students.
- Consulting with instructors as needed to ensure understanding and implementation of accommodations.
- Assisting in resolving student conflicts and coaching students on self-advocacy.
- Advocating for equal access.
- Educating the university community on disability awareness.
- Referring students to on and off campus resources.
- Obtaining and maintaining assistive technology.
- Reviewing and updating department website each fall and spring semester.
- Maintaining academic integrity for all classes, which includes but is not limited to test monitoring, advising, and assisting with class assignments.

### **Faculty/Staff**

Responsibilities include:

- Following Nicholls State University policies and procedures
- Maintaining **confidentiality** of the student registered with the Dyslexia Center and discussing disability related issues **privately**.
- Respecting the privacy of the student's diagnosis. A student is not required under law to disclose the actual diagnosis.
- Discussing the implementation of accommodations with the student.
- Hold students with disabilities to the same academic and behavioral standards as all students.
- Ensuring that the proposed accommodations do not substantially alter curricula standards.
- Ensuring accommodations listed on the accommodation letter are implemented.
- Consulting with the Dyslexia Center with any questions about the appropriateness of required accommodations.
- Providing accommodations for only those students who are registered with a disability service provider (ODS or Dyslexia Center).

- Referring students who may possibly have a disability to ODS or the Dyslexia Center for assistance.
- Adding a disability statement on syllabi informing students of ODS.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

Students with a documented disability are entitled to classroom accommodations under the ADA. To receive accommodations, contact the Office of Disability Services at (985) 448-4430 or 158-A Shaver Gym. Additional information can be found at <http://www.nicholls.edu/disability/>.

**Students**

Students enrolled in the Dyslexia Center must:

- Follow Nicholls State University policies and procedures
- Adhere to all policies and procedures of the Dyslexia Center set forth in this manual and on Moodle.
- Follow procedures according to the Dyslexia Center Student Contract. Contract must be signed every semester that the student is enrolled in the Center.
- Have the same obligation as any student to meet and maintain the institution's academic standards.
- Notify the Center if they do not wish to be enrolled in the Center.
- Meet with their designated coordinator during the first week of class.
- Self-identify by presenting an accommodation form during a meeting with the instructor for each class in which the student wishes to receive classroom and testing accommodations. This accommodation form must be signed by the instructor and returned to the student's coordinator by the end of the third week of classes.

**Accommodations**

Accommodations for students shall neither affect the academic curricula nor compromise educational standards. The identified accommodations may not be granted retroactively and are meant to ensure equal access to education. Examples of accommodations include but are not limited to:

- Extended time for tests and in class assignments
- Reader for Tests
- Use of Calculator
- Use of Dictionary
- Note-taker
- Preferential Seating
- Use of Computer
- Provide Additional Directions
- Provide List of Required Textbooks Early to Obtain Textbooks on Reading Software
- Read Tests Orally
- Distraction Limited Testing Room
- Essay Read Back
- Omit/Prorate Spelling

- Avoid Scheduling Consecutive Testing Sessions
- Test Questions Rephrased

### **Assistive Devices/Technology**

The Dyslexia Center will maintain software and hardware to accommodate the needs of registered students. Assistive devices and technology are for academic purposes only. The following is an updated list as of 05/17/2012:

#### **Software**

- All Software in ITS open labs
- Ginger Software
- Kurzweil 3000
- Dragon Naturally Speaking

#### **Hardware**

- Desktop computers, printers, and scanners
- Intel Reader
- Copier

### **Dismissal Policy**

Students who violate any portion of the student contract may be dismissed without reimbursement of the Dyslexia fee for the current semester in which the violation occurred. Students must reapply to the Center if they wish to seek enrollment in the Center, and a committee will make a determination concerning readmission to the Center.

### **Tutoring Policy**

Students are required to make tutoring appointments with the coordinator who will provide tutoring. If a student will be late or not be able to attend a tutoring appointment, it is the student's responsibility to notify the coordinator. If a student misses 3 recurring or scheduled tutoring appointments, the coordinator will notify the student via email that the tutoring appointments have been cancelled. The student will then be responsible to make as-needed tutoring appointments. If the student misses any additional tutoring appointments, the student may lose tutoring privileges.

### **Testing Policy**

Students are required to send a testing email to both the Center and the instructor at least three (3) days prior to the test. A confirmation email will be emailed to the student after the initial request is sent. Center staff monitors students; any form of cheating will be grounds for dismissal from the Center. Center staff has the authority to confiscate any unauthorized personal items or materials on the student's person while testing. In the event that the student is suspected of cheating, the instructor will be notified. Center staff will also document cheating in writing and the documentation will be kept in the student's folder.

### **Kurzweil Policy**

Students requesting textbooks or novels to be converted into the Kurzweil software must be enrolled in the class for which they are requesting the textbook or novel, purchase or rent the textbook or novel, and complete a Textbook Request Form. The student's schedule will be

checked to confirm that the student is registered in the class. Students must allow ample time for the Center to acquire the textbook and complete the conversion process. Textbook requests will be processed on a first come-first served basis. Once the Center receives a textbook, the student must sign a Student Agreement for access to E-Books. Kurzweil is to be used for academic purposes only. Students are given a user name and password that is only accessible while enrolled in the Center.

### **Students Taking Internet Classes**

If a student is taking an Internet class at Nicholls State University, the student must still get the instructor to sign the accommodation form during the instructor's office hours. If the instructor does not hold office hours due to teaching only Internet classes, the student must send the "Email for Online Classes" from the student's NSU email account to the instructor and attach the accommodation form. The accommodation form must be scanned in by a Center staff member and emailed to the student. The instructor must respond saying he received the accommodation form and is digitally signing the form. The student must then forward the email from the instructor to the assigned coordinator in the Center.

### **Note-takers**

Students who have note-taker as an accommodation have the option of finding their own note-taker or requesting a Center letter to give to the instructor to assist the student in finding a note-taker. Once the student has acquired a note-taker, the note-taker must come to the Center to complete the necessary paperwork to be kept on file. Students who receive notes from a note-taker must not distribute notes to anyone.

### **Course Substitutions**

Core courses and those that are deemed essential for a degree requirement cannot be substituted; however, if the diagnosis interferes with one's ability to participate in a course that does not alter the curriculum, a substitution may be granted. The student must meet with and receive approval from the department head for the area of study. The Center coordinator can assist in the determination of course substitution. Once a determination has been made, the student must notify their coordinator of the change.

### **Academic/Financial Aid Appeals**

When appealing a grade, students must follow the rules and procedures outlined in the University Student Handbook (Section 5.1, pg. 17). If a student requests a letter from the Dyslexia Center for the appeals board, he/she must provide a reasonable amount of time for a response. The letter will state the student's initial registration and participation in the Center program. It is at the discretion of Center staff whether a statement of character will be provided in the appeals letter.

When appealing financial aid, students must follow the rules and procedures set forth by the financial aid office. If a student requests a letter from the Dyslexia Center for the appeals board, he/she must provide a reasonable amount of time for a response. The letter will state the student's initial registration and participation in the Center program. It is at the discretion of Center staff whether a statement of character will be provided in the appeals letter.

**Grievance Procedure**

If a student believes he/she has been discriminated against or harassed due to a disability, he/she should contact the Dyslexia Center and/or refer to the Student Code of Conduct Handbook (Section 7, pg. 32) for further assistance.

If a student has an academic grievance, he/she should refer to the Student Code of Conduct Handbook (Section 5, pg.19).

**Campus Housing**

To request special accommodations due to a disability, contact Housing and Residence Life at (985) 493-3305 or go to <http://www.nicholls.edu/housing/>. The appropriate documentation to submit is a letter from the evaluator with housing recommendations.

**Links/Resources**

For updated information on resources and other links which may be of further assistance, refer to the Dyslexia Center website (<http://www.nicholls.edu/dyslexia>). Also, Moodle is kept up-to-date with important information as the semester progresses. (<http://moodle2.nicholls.edu/moodle/>)

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) is an excellent resource for students with a disability. LRS website is ([www.dss.state.la.us](http://www.dss.state.la.us)).