



Personal Service Attendant (PSA) Guidelines

NOCE Disability Support Services (DSS) Goal: Inclusion and Independence

DSS aims to maximize the inclusion in higher education, employment, and independent living for individuals with disabilities. Use of a PSA often leads to less independence and decreased inclusion. DSS may approve a PSA when necessary based on the interactive process with the goal of reducing student reliance on attendants as quickly as possible. Reliance on a PSA may be an indicator that a student is not ready for a college environment. The use of a PSA for personal care tasks for students with substantial physical limitations is not expected to be faded, however, the student must be able to demonstrate independent learning.

What is a Personal Service Attendant?

North Orange Continuing Education (NOCE), Disability Support Services recognizes personal service attendants for students who are limited in performing self-care functions or students who require prompting for behavior, staying on task, or following directions. In either case it is the student's responsibility to arrange for their personal service attendant. **North Orange Continuing Education is not responsible for locating, coordinating, or making financial arrangements for personal service attendants.**

A PSA assists students with accessibility needs, such as turning pages or handling supplies. However, PSAs should not act on behalf of the student, engage in instructional activities, or influence the student's learning during class. PSAs are not tutors, they are not instructional aides, and they are not permitted to provide instruction. **Parents and close family members are not permitted to serve as PSAs, except in immediate emergencies.**

PSA Responsibilities

1. Follow NOCE and the North Orange County Community College District (NOCCCD) policies and procedures, including the Standards of Student Conduct and Discipline.
2. Complete the PSA Guideline form, Volunteer form, and NOCCCD Waiver for Liability form.
3. Provide only the support discussed and agreed upon during the interactive process between the student and Disability Support Services (DSS) professional. Failure to adhere to the agreed-upon role may result in limitations or denial of the PSA's presence on campus or in class.
4. At all times, follow the direction of the classroom professor, instructional staff, counseling faculty, emergency responders, and administrators.

Student Responsibilities:

1. Submit appropriate disability verification to DSS. The verified disability and resulting educational limitations must support the necessity of having a PSA accompany the student on campus and/or in the classroom setting.
2. Ensure that each personal service attendant registers with DSS and signs the PSA forms and NOCCCD Waiver for Liability form each academic year.
3. Allow adequate time to obtain NOCCCD Board approval of PSA as a volunteer (which may take up to three weeks).
4. If personnel changes occur during the term, ensure that the new PSA registers with DSS and completes PSA/Liability forms before accompanying the student on campus or in the classroom setting.
5. Abide by NOCE's policies, regulations, and procedures.
6. At all times, follow the direction of the classroom professor, instructional staff, counseling faculty, emergency responders, and administrators.

Interactive Process

The student, the DSS Counselor, and where appropriate, their parents/conservators, will discuss the student's educational limitations related to their identified area of disability and will develop an Academic Accommodation Plan as part of the interactive process. The DSS counselor will explore the need for a PSA utilizing questions that include, but are not limited to, the following:

- What are the student's educational limitations that require a PSA?
- If a PSA is approved, will the student be able to independently demonstrate measurable progress?
- What is the purpose of the PSA?
- What specifically will the PSA do?
- What documentation supports the request?
- How will the student achieve independence?
- What happens if a PSA is gone for a short time? Or if they are sick or absent?
- Is the PSA needed for Personal Care (e.g. physical limitations that require support for getting items out for student, assistance in the restroom, etc.)?
- Is the PSA needed for safety awareness (e.g. prevent student from wandering off, provide support for interacting with strangers, etc.)? If so, how will the PSA accomplish this?
- Is the PSA needed to keep the student on task? What does this look like? Is the PSA observing the student to see if they are overstimulated, frustrated, etc.? If so, how will the PSA intervene? This cannot disrupt the learning environment.
- Is the PSA needed to support behavioral challenges? If so, how will the PSA intervene? If frequency and intensity of the behavior disrupts the learning environment, then it would not be appropriate.
- Is the PSA being requested for a medical need? NOCE does not have medical staff on campus to support students. Faculty and staff will call 911 if a student needs medical intervention even if there is a PSA with the student.

- Are there alternative accommodations or strategies the student should consider that could increase their independence at the post-secondary level?
- Is the student able to make progress and benefit from post-secondary classes with or without a PSA?

Family Members Are Not Utilized As PSAs

NOCE DSS has established programs to support the development of student independence. Family members are wonderful supports, however, students develop a reliance on family members when they serve as a PSA. Therefore, NOCE does not support the use of family members as PSAs except in an emergency situation. An emergency would be a single day occurrence, giving the PSA agency time to find a substitute or new PSA. The following outlines the reasons for this policy:

- Students often achieve less independence when a family member is their PSA.
- Employers are not willing to hire a person who needs a family member present as an attendant.
- Family members tend to intervene with their loved one more quickly than PSAs who are not family members.
- Students tend to socialize less with peers when there is a family member present.
- Students must demonstrate independent learning and progress toward class objectives and learning outcomes. Students tend to defer to a loved one when they are present instead of independently responding to the instructor and peers in the classroom.

Other Notes

- There are many reasons necessitating the limitation of the number of PSA in a single classroom:
 - Fire code limits room occupancy.
 - Too many PSAs in a classroom can disrupt the learning environment.
 - The professor is responsible for directing the activities of students and all personnel in the classroom. Too many PSAs make it difficult for the professor to provide instruction and to ensure they are meeting the needs of all students.
- DSS Counselors notify the DSS Professors after a PSA has been approved for the student. Notification includes specific responsibilities of the PSA.

Personal Service Attendant (PSA) Agreement

I (Student) and (Parent) understand and agree to the following:

- NOCE's DSS programs promote student independence in the home, the community, on-campus, and the workplace.
- Reliance on PSAs often diminish a student's opportunity to develop the skills needed for independence which limits social engagement and integration, success in college, the ability to obtain and maintain employment, and the

opportunity to live independently. Students who rely on PSAs tend to maintain a reliance on their family at a very high level, limiting their ability to be more independent even while living with their family.

- A personal service attendant (PSA) is not permitted to accompany a student in class (in-person or virtual) unless approved by a DSS Counselor through the interactive process.
- PSAs must wear a NOCE lanyard on campus.
- If a student is unable to independently demonstrate measurable progress, then a PSA may not be an appropriate accommodation. Lack of measurable progress is when a student:
 - Fails to make measurable progress toward the goals developed for the course as established in the Academic Accommodation Plan (AAP) including the Student Education Contract; and/or,
 - Fails to meet the academic standards established by the college, as applied to all NOCE students.
- Students must be able to comply with the Standards of Student Conduct and Discipline (Board Policy and Administrative Procedures 5500), with or without accommodation.
- Family members are not permitted to be PSAs except in emergencies as defined previously.
- There will be a plan to fade the attendant to the back of the classroom, then to outside of the classroom, and eventually fade the attendant all together.
- There will be a meeting with the student, counselor, and student's family after the first semester (or sooner based on faculty and staff observations). Faculty and staff will make recommendations on: the plan to fade out the attendant, the student's ability to independently benefit from instruction, the student's ability to comply with the standards of student conduct, and the student's readiness to be on a college campus.

Date of Agreement: _____

Student

Parent/Conservator/Family Member

NOCE DSS Counselor

Personal Service Attendant