

GUIDELINES FOR DOCUMENTATION OF A DISABILITY

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Students with disabilities requesting academic accommodations are required to provide documentation of their disability to Disability Support Services (DSS). DSS will determine eligibility and appropriate accommodations, case by case, based on quality, recency and completeness of the documentation submitted. Quality documentation provides the evidence needed for the decision-maker to clearly understand the impact of the disability in a post-secondary environment in order to determine appropriate accommodations.

The following guidelines provide students and professionals with a common understanding of the components of documentation that are necessary to establish the need for accommodations in accordance of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities act of 1990, as amended.

Credentials of the evaluator(s).

Formal documentation is provided by an appropriate, qualified professional. The professional's name, title, credentials and affiliation should be provided. The professional should have no personal relationship with the student.

Diagnostic statement identifying the disability.

The documentation must include a clear diagnostic statement that describes how the condition was diagnosed, provides information on the functional impact, and details the typical progression or prognosis of the condition.

Description of the diagnostic methodology used.

The documentation must include a description of the diagnostic criteria, evaluation methods, procedures, tests and dates of administration, as well as a clinical narrative, observation, and specific results. Where appropriate to the nature of the disability, having both summary data and specific test scores* within the report is necessary. Methods may include formal instruments, medical examinations, structured interviews, and performance observations.

Description of the current functional limitations.

The recency of documentation is critical to the establishment of the student's current functional limitations. Information on how the disabling condition(s) currently impacts the individual is useful for both establishing a disability and identifying possible accommodations. A combination of the results of formal evaluation procedures, clinical narrative, and the individual's self-report is the most comprehensive approach to fully documenting impact. The best documentation is thorough enough to demonstrate the extent of how a major life activity is substantially limited by providing a clear sense of the severity, frequency and pervasiveness of the condition(s).

Description of current and past accommodations, services and/or medications.

Comprehensive documentation should include a description of both current and past medications, support services, accommodations, auxiliary aids, and assistive devices including their effectiveness in mitigating functional impacts of the disability. It would be helpful if a rationale is provided for the need for when medication/treatment is producing favorable results.

Recommendations for accommodations, adaptive devices, assistive services, compensatory strategies, or other related services.

Recommendations from professionals with a history of working with the individual provide valuable information for the documentation review and planning for academic accommodations. It is most helpful when recommended accommodations and strategies are logically related to functional limitations; if connections are not obvious, a clear explanation of their relationship can be useful in decision-making.

FERPA regulations apply to all documentation sent to our office.

*Examples of assessment instruments for Learning Disabilities include: WAIS-IV, WAIS-III, Woodcock-Johnson Test of Achievement, WIAT-II.