



Disability Services Documentation Guidelines

A student requesting assistance from Disability Services must provide current documentation of his or her disability. This documentation is necessary because assessment constitutes the basis for determining reasonable services and accommodations. At times, the college also examines diagnostic information when determining the appropriateness of academic adjustments for a given student. Both substantiate the appropriateness of various responses to a student's needs or requests. In addition, the assessment should report how the student's disability has interfered with educational achievement. Appropriate documentation should meet three criteria.

- 1) **The documentation must be comprehensive and include a clear diagnostic statement.** Documentation regarding the disability should include a description of the assessment tools used to render the diagnosis as well as all test and subtest scores.

For most physical disabilities, comprehensive documentation would include the results of a medical examination with specific regard to the disability. For example, a student with a visual impairment should submit the results of a visual screening performed by an eye doctor.

For psychological disabilities, comprehensive documentation would include the psychological assessment tools and the results of psychological testing. Particularly with psychological disabilities, it is helpful for the diagnostician to comment on the severity and frequency of the disability. For example, a student with depression should submit the results of a psychological report including information about the assessment tools used to diagnose depression, the frequency of depressive episodes, and severity of the depression.

For learning disabilities, comprehensive documentation must identify either a significant discrepancy between achievement and ability or an intra-cognitive discrepancy not attributable to other disabling conditions or to environmental deprivation. More than one

assessment device should be administered for the purpose of diagnosing a learning disability. Testing must address, at a minimum, the aptitude, achievement, and information processing abilities of the student. The testing must also include a clear diagnostic statement. Individuals learning styles and learning differences do not by themselves constitute a specific learning disability. For example, a student with a learning disability would submit documentation which might include results from the WISC-R concerning aptitude, the Woodcock-Johnson concerning achievement, and an interpretation by the diagnostician of the subtests of the WISC-R concerning information processing.

For Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD) comprehensive documentation must show that the DSM-IV criteria have been met. Information and/or test scores must be included to rule out other possible diagnoses. The documentation must give clear and specific evidence for the diagnosis. A brief statement on a prescription form or letterhead is not acceptable. The process of diagnosis should be reported, providing test scores and/or appropriate data.

- 2) **Documentation must be current and should reflect the student's present needs and level of functioning.** Appropriate documentation should include information from an assessment completed within the past five years, which reflects the current needs of the adult student. The documentation should include a statement of functional impact or limitation. Also, include suggestions of reasonable accommodation(s), which might be appropriate at the postsecondary level. These recommendations should be supported by the diagnosis. You will need to contact the Coordinator of Special Needs if documentation exceeds four to five years.
- 3) **Professionals conducting assessments and rendering diagnoses of disabilities must be qualified to do so.** Experience in working with an adult population is essential. Diagnostic reports must be submitted on the letterhead of the qualified professional and must include the names, titles, and license numbers of the evaluators as well as the date(s) of testing.