Office of Student Disability Services

Documentation Guidelines

A student requesting assistance from Student Disability Services must provide current documentation of his or her disability and/or medical condition. This documentation is necessary because assessment constitutes the basis for determining reasonable services and accommodations. At times, the university 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. The documentation should include the following:
   - Diagnosis
   - Current Impact
   - Recommendations for Accommodations

**General Documentation Guidelines:** Documentation must 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. Specific guidelines are provided below:

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-5 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.

For Chronic Medical Conditions documentation should explain the current functional limitations imposed by the medical condition. This includes the specific diagnosis, whether or not the condition is constant or episodic (frequency and/or duration), whether or not you are taking any medication(s), along with the possible effects, and any other pertinent information that may assist SDS in determining reasonable accommodations.

For Temporary Medical (pregnancy, injuries, impact from surgery) documentation must include the nature of the injury and recommendations for services/modifications needed and the anticipated date of return to classes. Reasonable accommodations will be determined based on the documentation provided and the student’s needs. Please note that in some cases, the request for medical withdrawal is the best option for the student. This will be determined in consultation with the student, SDS Office and faculty, when appropriate.

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. Assessment information from early childhood or adolescence is generally not acceptable. You will need to contact the Director of Student Disability Services or designee if the documentation exceeds five years. Also, the documentation can include suggested accommodations with an explanation statement.

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.

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