



PHYSICAL DISABILITIES AND MEDICAL DOCUMENTATION GUIDELINES

Students requesting accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 must provide documentation of a diagnosed physical or medical impairment that substantially limits a major life activity. Documentation and recommendations must be appropriate to the postsecondary setting. The report must describe the current impact of the disability on the student's academic performance.

Accommodations are individually determined each semester. Once Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) receives documentation, it is the student's responsibility to make an appointment with a staff member at SSD to discuss eligibility and receive academic accommodations that semester.

Confidentiality Statement

Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) will not release any information at any point in the disability accommodation process regarding an individual's diagnosis or medical information without his or her informed written consent or under compulsion of legal process. Information will be released only on a "need to know" basis, except where otherwise required by law. All documentation will be stored in a secure place.

Relevant Terminology

Physical disabilities and Medical disabilities: Include but are not limited to impairments, chronic illnesses, traumatic brain injury, arthritis and mobility, chemical sensitivity, cancer, AIDS and manual limitations.

Major life activity: Examples of major life activities include walking, sitting, standing, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working, caring for oneself, and performing manual tasks.

Current functional limitation: A substantial impairment in an individual's ability to function with respect to the condition, manner, or duration of a required major life activity.

Documentation Guidelines

1. Documentation must be current: Although some individuals have long-standing or permanent diagnoses, because of the changing manifestations of many physical disabilities, it is essential for those individuals to provide recent and appropriate documentation from a qualified evaluator.

2. Documentation must be comprehensive and should include:
 - A clear, specific diagnosis of a disability and a statement outlining the ways the student is substantially limited in one or more major life activities
 - Description of the current symptoms, fluctuating conditions/symptoms and prognosis
 - A summary of assessment procedures used to make the diagnosis, as well as a date of diagnosis
 - Medical information which may be important in a college/university environment, including any medication, side effects of the prescribed medication, and whether there are crisis episodes associated with the disability. Cognitive or achievement assessments that contribute to the diagnosis may be included with results given in standardized scores or percentiles.

3. Recommendation for choosing a qualified professional:
 - Qualified evaluators are defined as those licensed individuals who are qualified to evaluate and diagnose physical disabilities or who may serve as members of a diagnostic team. These individuals or team members may include physicians, surgeons, dentists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, Neurologists, and other relevantly trained healthcare professionals qualified to make such diagnoses.
 - Finally, the name, title, and credentials of the qualified professional writing the report should be included. Information about licensure or certification, including the area of specialization, employment, and the state or province in which the individual practices, should also be clearly stated in the documentation. All reports should be typed on professional letterhead, dated, and signed.

4. Suggestions of reasonable accommodations that might be appropriate at the postsecondary level are encouraged. These recommendations should be supported by the diagnosis. Include rationale for each accommodation requested. The clinician must describe the degree of impact of the disorder on a specific major life activity, as well as the degree of impact on the individual. A link must be established between the requested accommodations and the functional limitations of the individual that are pertinent to the anticipated academic situation. Please note that SSD will make the final determination of eligibility for accommodations.

***** Note that submission of documentation is not the same as the request for services. You still must complete the Application for Accommodations and Services. SSD cannot support any accommodation requests until the documentation is complete.**