



PSYCHIATRIC/ EMOTIONAL DISABILITIES 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 psychiatric/emotional disability 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.

Documentation Guidelines:

Psychiatric disability documentation must include all of the following elements:

- 1. The evaluation must be performed by a qualified individual:** The assessment must be provided by a licensed psychologist, psychiatrist, psychiatric nurse practitioner, or clinical social worker. An assessment from a general physician typically does not suffice.
- 2. Currency of documentation:** Evaluations must be dated within 6 months of the date of SSD registration. Older evaluations will be considered if submitted with more recent supplemental documentation. In addition, documentation will need to be updated at the beginning of each academic year in order to assess up-to-date accommodation needs.
- 3. Current treatment and medications:** Documentation should include any counseling, specific therapies, current prescribed medications and any side-effects that would compromise academic functioning.
- 4. Specific diagnosis:** This should not merely refer to symptoms and should correspond to a specific diagnosis as per the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual – IV (DSM-IV)*. Please note that a diagnosis in and of itself does not automatically warrant approval of requested accommodations.
- 5. Clinical Summary:** A narrative clinical summary must include the following:
 - A history of presenting symptoms, the current severity and expected duration of

symptoms, a description of functional limitations and the impact of the disability on the student's current participation in courses, programs, services, or any other activities of the University and a basis for the opinion.

- Recommendations for academic accommodations, including a rationale for each.

***** 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.**