

For a Psychological Disability

Documentation Requirements - Psychological Disability

GUIDELINES FOR DOCUMENTATION OF A PSYCHOLOGICAL DISABILITY

Each student requesting accommodations and support services through the Office of Specialized Services is required to submit documentation to verify eligibility under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and OSS policies. As defined by Section 504 and the ADA, an individual with a disability is a person who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits a major life activity, including learning. Academic adjustments and other accommodations are implemented to provide equal access to college programs and services.

In order to establish eligibility as an individual with a disability, the student must submit documentation that is comprehensive and appropriate to a postsecondary setting, and that clearly specifies the presence of a disability.

Any specific recommendations for accommodations must be based on significant functional limitations and must be supported by the diagnostic assessment.

Accommodations and academic adjustments cannot be implemented until the student's documentation meets these criteria. Prior history of having received an accommodation does not, in and of itself, warrant or guarantee its continued provision. An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or a 504 Plan is not sufficient documentation of a disability.

Documentation of a psychological disability must be current, reporting on the student's status within the past year. More recent documentation may be required if deemed necessary by the disability services professional in the Office of Specialized Services. Documentation must be provided by a psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker, or other mental health professional with training and expertise related to the psychiatric diagnosis(es) identified. The diagnostic report must be submitted on official letterhead with name(s), title(s), professional credentials, address, and telephone/number of the person providing the documentation. All reports must be signed and dated.

Documentation must include the following information:

- **Diagnosis** - A complete DSM-IV diagnosis with an accompanying description of the specific symptoms experienced by the student. The diagnosis should be based upon a comprehensive clinical interview and, where clinically appropriate, psychological testing.
- **Current treatment** - Identification of treatment, medications, or other services and/or interventions currently prescribed or in use.

- **Evaluation of impact** - Identification of the substantial limitation on a major life activity presented by the disability, and a description of the current functional impact of the disability in a college setting. The assessment should validate the need for services based on the impact of the student's disability and level of functioning in an educational setting.
- **Specific recommendations** - Suggested accommodations and/or academic adjustments, with an explanation supporting the need for each accommodation to achieve equal access. Diagnostic information must support the need for the recommended accommodations.

Submission of documentation is not the same as the request for services. The student must initiate the request for services and/or accommodations by following the college's Accommodations Procedures (See OSS Web site). The Office of Specialized Services is ultimately responsible for determining appropriate accommodations, if any, based on the documentation provided.

All documentation is confidential and will be assessed according to these guidelines. Rev. 3/01