

Psychological Disabilities Documentation Guidelines

Disability Resources and Services (DRS) provides academic services and accommodations for students with diagnosed disabilities. The documentation provided must demonstrate a disability covered under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008. The ADA defines a disability as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. In addition, in order for a student to be considered eligible to receive academic accommodations, the documentation must show functional limitations that impact the individual in the academic setting.

DRS requires current and comprehensive documentation in order to determine appropriate services and accommodations. The outline below has been developed to assist the student in working with the treating or diagnosing healthcare professional(s) in obtaining the specific information necessary to evaluate eligibility for academic accommodations.

1. DIAGNOSIS

- *DSM-V diagnosis:* based on current psychological assessment. Psychological conditions may change over time; therefore current evaluations are critical to providing reasonable accommodations.
- *Evaluation:* tools used to determine diagnosis (interview, assessment tools, etc.), including information regarding severity of symptoms, duration, and prognosis.
- *Treatment:* list current treatment including therapy, medication, and potential side effects.

2. FUNCTIONAL LIMITATIONS

- *Major Life Activities:* identify what areas are substantially limited by student's disability.
- *Academic Impact:* areas that may be affected by symptoms and side effects of treatment.
- *Considerations:* identify any symptoms or environmental factors that might exacerbate condition.

3. ACCOMMODATIONS

- *History:* description of accommodations used in the past.
- *Recommendations:* suggestions as to what accommodations may provide the student equal access and a rationale as to why these accommodations/adjustments/services are warranted based upon the student's functional limitation.

The healthcare professional(s) conducting the assessment and/or making the diagnosis must be qualified to do so. These persons are licensed treatment providers (e.g. licensed psychologists, licensed social workers, etc.) or members of a medical specialty. Licensed treatment providers should not be related to the individual being assessed.

Documentation should be on letterhead and must include the name, title, and license number of the evaluator. Any reports which provide additional related information should be included (e.g. psycho-educational testing, neuropsychological test results, etc.). A verification form is also available to provide guidance in the assessment process.

The information you provide will not become part of the student's educational records, but it will be kept in the student's file at DRS, where it will be held strictly confidential. If you have questions, please call the DRS office at 602-787-7171.

Thank you for your assistance.