



Office of Special Services

**GUIDELINES FOR  
DOCUMENTATION**



## Counseling Department – Office of Special Services

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### **GUIDELINES FOR DOCUMENTATION – *PHYSICAL DISABILITY***

Students seeking supportive services from the Office of Special Services on the basis of a previously diagnosed physical or medical condition must submit documentation that verifies their eligibility under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The documentation must describe a disabling condition, which is defined by the presence of significant limitations in one or more major life areas. The Special Services Counselor is available to consult with diagnosticians regarding any of these guidelines.

1. Evaluations must be comprehensive. Documentation should show that criteria for specific disorders have been met and must identify that the disorder is a permanent disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.
2. Professionals conducting assessments and rendering diagnoses must be qualified to do so. A physician, surgeon, physical therapist, occupational therapist or other medical specialist with experience and expertise in the area related to the student's disability should make the diagnosis.
3. Documentation should:
  - a. Include a diagnosis and state clear and specific evidence of the nature of the disability and how it meets the criteria set forth in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disability Act
  - b. Describe the impact of the disability and the effects on the student's learning in an academic setting
  - c. Report the process of diagnosis including a summary of assessment procedures and evaluation instruments that have been used to make the diagnosis, with test scores and/or appropriate data
  - d. List specific academic accommodation suggestions and provide rationale for each suggestion
  - e. Be on letterhead and must include the names, titles, and license information of the evaluators as well as the date(s) of evaluation.
4. The age of the documentation is dependent upon the condition and the nature of the student's request for accommodation. Disabilities that are sporadic or change over time may require more current evaluation.

***Letters or prescriptions from doctors or other medical professionals that do not contain accompanying diagnostic information are not acceptable forms of documentation.***



## Counseling Department – Office of Special Services

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### **GUIDELINES FOR DOCUMENTATION – *PSYCHOLOGICAL DISABILITY***

Students seeking supportive services from the Office of Special Services on the basis of a previously diagnosed psychological disability must submit documentation that verifies their eligibility under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The documentation must describe a disabling condition, which is defined by the presence of significant limitations in one or more major life areas. The Special Services Counselor is available to consult with diagnosticians regarding any of these guidelines.

1. Evaluations must be comprehensive. Documentation must show that DSM-IV-TR criteria for specific disorders have been met and must identify that the disorder is a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.
2. Professionals conducting assessments and rendering diagnoses must be qualified to do so. Trained and certified and/or licensed psychologists, social workers, professional counselors and/or psychiatric physicians are usually those professions involved in the process of assessment. The person who signs the report must be the one who conducts the evaluation and writes the report.
3. Documentation should:
  - a. Include a diagnosis and state clear and specific evidence of the nature of the disability and how it meets the criteria set forth in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disability Act
  - b. Describe the impact of the disability and the effects on the student's learning in an academic setting
  - c. Report the process of diagnosis including a summary of assessment procedures and evaluation instruments that have been used to make the diagnosis, with test scores and/or appropriate data
  - d. List specific academic accommodation suggestions and provide rationale for each suggestion
  - e. Be on letterhead and must include the names, titles, and license information of the evaluators as well as the date(s) of evaluation.
  - f. Documentation must be current. In most cases, the evaluation should have been completed within the past five years.

***Letters or prescriptions from doctors or other medical professionals that do not contain accompanying diagnostic information are not acceptable forms of documentation.***



## Counseling Department – Office of Special Services

### **GUIDELINES FOR DOCUMENTATION - SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY**

These guidelines are provided to identify evaluation reports that appropriately document students with specific learning disabilities. Students with the appropriate documentation may receive accommodations through Office of Special Services. The Special Services Counselor is available to consult with diagnosticians regarding any of these guidelines.

1. Include a diagnosis and state clear and specific evidence of the nature of the disability and how it meets the criteria set forth in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disability Act
  - o Describe the impact of the disability and the effects on the student's learning in an academic setting
2. Evaluations must be comprehensive. Documentation must show that DSM-IV-TR criteria for learning disorders have been met.
  - o Aptitude. The Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale-Revised (WAIS-III) with subtest scores or the Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery-Revised: Tests of Cognitive Ability are the preferred instruments.
  - o Achievement. Current levels of functioning in reading, mathematics and written language are required. Among the preferred instruments are the Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery-revised: Test of Achievement, the Scholastic Abilities Test for Adults, and the Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests-Revised. The Wide Range Achievement Test is not preferred. Evaluation of the student's current record of academic achievement may be applicable.
  - o Information Processing. Specific areas of information processing (e.g. short and long term memory; sequential memory; auditory and visual perception/processing; processing speed) must be assessed. Use of subtests for the WAIS-R or the Woodcock-Johnson Test of cognitive Ability are acceptable.
3. Testing must be current. In most cases, this means within five years or at least in late adolescence. If the student entering the program is an older adult, the testing should have been carried out during or, preferably, following late adolescence. Since assessment constitutes the basis for determining reasonable accommodations, it is in a student's best interest to provide recent and appropriate documentation to serve as the basis for designing appropriate accommodations in an academically competitive college environment.
4. Documentation should state clear and specific evidence and identification of a learning disability.
5. ***Non-specific diagnosis such as Individual "learning styles" and "learning differences," "academic problems," "attention problems," "mood disorders," and "test anxiety" in and of themselves do not constitute a learning disability.***

6. Test scores/data should be included. This is important since certain College policies and procedures (e.g. petitioning for permission to substitute courses) require actual data to substantiate eligibility.
7. Professionals conducting assessments and rendering diagnoses of specific learning disabilities must be qualified to do so. Trained and certified and/or licensed psychologists, learning disabilities specialists and educational therapists are usually those professions involved in the process of assessment. The person who signs the report should be the person who administers the tests and writes the report. Experience in working with an adult population is essential.
8. Evaluators should be able to demonstrate that the selection of assessment instruments is based upon the suitability (i.e. reliability and validity) for use with an adult population.
9. Diagnostic reports must include the names, titles and license information (state and number, if applicable) of the evaluators as well as the date(s) of testing.
10. Reports should contain recommendations about accommodations for the academic setting, which the College will consider.

***Letters or prescriptions from doctors or other medical professionals that do not contain accompanying diagnostic information are not acceptable forms of documentation.***