

Disability Documentation Guidelines For Individuals with Disabilities

Edgewood College Disability Services

Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, individuals with disabilities are protected from discrimination and assured services and accommodations that provide equal access to the activities and programs of the College. To establish that an individual is covered under the ADA, documentation must be submitted indicating that the disability substantially limits a major life activity. If a student is requesting an academic or classroom-based adjustment, or accommodations are requested, learning or access to learning environments must be one of the major life activities affected. Documentation submitted must

- I. Be appropriate to verify eligibility
- II. Demonstrate a current substantial impact of one or more major life activities, and
- III. (Support the request for accommodations, academic adjustments, auxiliary aids, or a combination of these.

To qualify for disability services at Edgewood College, a student is required to provide diagnostic documentation from a licensed clinical professional familiar with the history and functional implications of the impairments. Disability documentation must adequately verify the nature and extent of the disability in accordance with current professional standards and techniques, and it must clearly substantiate the need for all of the individual's specific accommodation requests. All documentation must be submitted on the official letterhead of the professional describing the disability. The report should be dated and signed and include the name, title, and professional credentials of the evaluator, including information about the professional's license or certification. If the original documentation is not complete or adequate enough to determine the extent of the disability or reasonable accommodation, Edgewood College has the discretion to require additional documentation. The student bears the cost of obtaining additional documentation. If the documentation is complete but the College desires a second professional opinion, Edgewood College bears the cost of obtaining the second opinion. Testing done by, or documentation submitted by a member of the student's family is unacceptable. Students requesting accommodations on the basis of multiple disabilities must provide evidence of all such conditions.

Students must complete and return an Intake Form with the disability documentation. The form should be completed and included with the other required materials as outlined below.

The following documents were used in the development of these policies and guidelines: *Disability Documentation Policies*, University of Wisconsin-Madison McBurney Disability Resource Center; *Application Procedure*, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Division of Rehabilitation-Education Services; and *Guidelines for Documentation of Psychiatric Disabilities in Adolescents and Adults*, The consortium on ADHD Documentation, Educational Testing Services (ETS).

I. Mobility, Systemic or Health-Related Disabilities

Individuals requesting accommodations based on mobility, systemic, or disease-related disabilities must provide documentation from a specialist in the area of the disability or medical condition consisting of

- a. Identification of the disabling condition(s)
- b. An assessment of the functional limitations of the condition(s) for which accommodations are being requested, and whether the limitation is mild, moderate, or substantial
- c. Suggestions as to how the functionally limiting manifestations of the condition(s) might be appropriately accommodated.

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II. Hearing Loss

Deaf or hard of hearing individuals requesting accommodations based on deafness or hearing loss must provide documentation consisting of

- a. An audiological evaluation and/or audiogram, no older than three (3) years if loss is progressive
- b. An assessment of the functional limitations of the hearing loss for which accommodations are being requested, and whether the degree of limitation is mild, moderate, or substantial
- c. Suggestions as to how the functionally limiting manifestations of the hearing loss condition(s) might appropriately be accommodated.

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III. Low Vision or Blindness

Individuals requesting accommodations based on low vision or blindness must provide documentation consisting of

- a. An ocular assessment or evaluation from an ophthalmologist
- b. A low-vision evaluation of residual visual function, when appropriate
- c. An assessment of the functional limitations of the condition(s) for which accommodations are being requested, and whether the degree of limitation is mild, moderate, or substantial

- d. Suggestions as to how the functionally limiting manifestations of the visual condition(s) might be appropriately accommodated.

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IV. Specific Learning Disability

Individuals requesting accommodations on the basis of a specific learning disability must provide documentation from a professional who has undergone comprehensive training and has relevant experience in differential diagnosis of a full range of cognitive and psychiatric disabilities (for example, licensed clinical psychologist, educational psychologist, or neuropsychologist). An IEP/504 plan alone is not sufficient documentation, but may be helpful. This documentation must include, but is not restricted to the following:

- a. **Diagnostic Interview**

A diagnostic interview including a description of the presenting problem(s); relevant developmental, medical, psycho-social and employment histories; family history (including primary language of the home and the student's current level of English fluency); and a discussion of co-morbidity where indicated.

- b. **Assessment**

A neuropsychological or psychoeducational evaluation is required and must provide clear and specific evidence that a learning disability exists and that alternative explanations for lower than expected performance have been ruled out. Assessment, and any resulting diagnosis, must consist of and be based on multiple forms of evidence (i.e., standardized test results, informal assessment results, observational and historical data) that supports a learning disability diagnosis. Evidence should be precise, objective, valid and acceptable in the field. Reports should follow statistically sound and widely accepted practices for interpreting data. Identifying a discrepancy between or among test scores is not sufficient to warrant the diagnosis of a learning disability or establish eligibility for accommodations. Evidence must establish a clear link between specific deficit areas and the functional limitations experienced by the individual.

For the evaluation to illustrate a substantial limitation to learning, the comprehensive assessment battery must assess the following domains:

- Aptitude / Cognitive Ability
- Academic Achievement
- Information Processing

- c. **Clinical Summary**

The clinical summary must (a) indicate the substantial limitations to major life activities posed by the specified learning disability, (b) describe the extent to which these limitations impact the academic context for which accommodations are being requested, (c) suggest how the specific effects of the learning disability may be accommodated, and (d) state how the effects of the learning disability are mediated by the recommended accommodations.

- d. **Currency**

To establish the need for accommodation, documentation must reflect *the current impact of*

the learning disability. Testing should have been conducted within the past three (3) years for a high school student entering college and within the past five years for an adult.

For detailed information refer to the documents entitled, "[Learning Disability Documentation Guidelines for Students at Edgewood College.](#)"

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V. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Individuals requesting accommodations on the basis of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) must provide documentation by a professional who has undergone comprehensive training and has relevant experience in differential diagnosis and the full range of psychiatric disorders (e.g., licensed clinical psychologist, neuropsychologist, psychiatrist and other relevantly trained medical doctors). The documentation must include the following:

- a. Evidence of early impairment. The condition must have been exhibited in childhood in more than one setting.
- b. Evidence of current impairment. An assessment of the individual's presenting attentional symptoms and evidence of current impulsive/hyperactive or inattentive behaviors that significantly impair functioning in two or more settings must be provided. In an academic setting, functional impairment is most often expressed in poor academic performance across a variety of academic tasks. In adults, work history may demonstrate an inability to retain or maintain employment.
- c. A diagnostic interview. The interview must contain self-report and third-party information pertaining to developmental history, family history of ADHD or other learning or psychological difficulties, relevant medical and medication history, a thorough academic history, a review of prior psychoeducational test reports to determine whether a pattern of strengths or weaknesses is supportive of attention or learning problems.
- d. Evidence of alternative diagnoses or explanations being ruled out. The documentation must investigate and discuss the possibility of dual diagnoses and alternative or coexisting mood, behavioral, neurological and/or personality disorders that may confound the ADHD diagnosis.
- e. Neuropsychological or psychoeducational assessment is needed to determine the current impact of the disorder on the individual's ability to function in an academic setting, and to establish eligibility for classroom accommodations including alternative testing, note takers and/or alternative media (taped books/electronic text). Such data should include subtest and standard scores.
- f. A specific psychological diagnosis as per the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual-IV (DSM-IV). Symptoms of hyperactivity/impulsivity that were present in childhood, and the current symptoms which have been present for at least the past six months and which impair functioning in two or more settings (e.g., school, work, home) must also be identified.
- g. An indication of whether or not the student was evaluated while on medication and the degree to which the prescribed treatment reduces the level or degree of impairment.
- h. A clinical summary which (a) indicates the substantial limitations to major life activities posed by the disability, (b) describes the extent to which these limitations would impact

the academic context for which accommodations are being requested, (c) suggests how the specific effects of the disability may be accommodated, and (d) states how the effects of ADHD are mediated by the recommended accommodations.

(These guidelines were adopted from "The Consortium Guidelines for Documentation of Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder in Adolescents and Adults" (1998), The Consortium on ADHD Documentation.)

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VI. Traumatic Brain Injury (trauma to the brain resulting from cerebral vascular accidents, tumors, or other medical conditions)

Individuals requesting accommodations on the basis of a traumatic brain injury (TBI) or brain insult must provide documentation by a neuropsychologist. Depending upon the impact of the disability, documentation from other specialists may be necessary. The documentation must include

- a. Thorough neuropsychological evaluation including assessment of the areas of attention, visuospatial/visual reasoning, language, academic skills, memory/learning, executive function, sensory, motor, and emotional status. Data should include subtest scores and percentiles.
- b. Evidence of current impairment. A history of the individual's presenting symptoms and evidence of behaviors that significantly impair functioning.
- c. A diagnostic interview. The interview must contain self-report and third-party information pertaining to developmental history, family history, learning or psychological difficulties, relevant medical history, and a thorough academic history.
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- e. A specific psychological diagnosis as per the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual-IV (DSM-IV).
- f. A clinical summary that (a) indicates the substantial limitations to major life activities posed by the disability, (b) describes the extent to which these limitations would impact the academic context for which accommodations are being requested, (c) suggests how the specific effects of the disability may be accommodated, and (d) states how the effects of the disability are mediated by the recommended accommodations.

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VII. Psychiatric Disability

Individuals requesting accommodations on the basis of a psychiatric disability must provide the current documentation from a licensed psychologist, psychiatrist, or licensed clinical social worker, which must include

- a. A specific, current psychiatric diagnosis as per the DSM-IV which indicates the nature, frequency and severity of the symptoms upon which the diagnosis was predicated. A diagnosis without an explicit listing of current symptoms is not sufficient. Primary and secondary Axis I and Axis II diagnoses are required.
- b. Evidence of current impairment. An assessment of the individual's presenting symptoms and evidence of current behaviors that significantly impair functioning must be provided. In an academic setting, functional impairment is most often expressed in poor academic performance across a variety of academic tasks.
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- d. Prescribed medications, dosages and schedules which may influence the types of accommodations provided.
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