



Disability Documentation Guidelines

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, individuals with disabilities are guaranteed certain protections and rights of equal access to programs and services. The rationale for seeking disability documentation is to determine the nature of the student's disability and the need for requested accommodations. Ensuring that "accommodations" provide effective access requires a deliberative and collaborative process that is responsive to the unique experience of each individual, as advised by the ADA. Besides reviewing documentation, an Access Center Accessibility Coordinator will engage in a structured exchange with the student to explore previous educational experiences, past use of accommodations, and what has been effective and ineffective in providing access.

Criteria for the source, scope and content of documentation differs by disability type. Documentation may include assessments, reports, and/or letters from qualified evaluators, professionals, or institutions. Common sources of documentation are health care providers, psychologists, psychiatrists, therapists, and/or information from a previous school (e.g., Individualized Education Plan (IEP)/ 504 Plan/ Summary of Performance (SOP).

Suggested Documentation Elements:

1. Typed on letterhead, dated, and signed by a qualified professional.
2. Diagnosed disability or disabilities.
3. Described impact or symptoms of the disability.
4. If applicable, discuss the severity and/or expected progression.
5. If applicable, list of medication and any side effects that impact functioning.
6. If applicable, current and/or past accommodations.
7. Any recommended accommodations.

Ideally, documentation described above should be brought to the student's first appointment meeting with the Access Center. However, no student should delay scheduling a meeting out of concern for not having appropriate documentation.