

Documentation Guidelines

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as amended in 2008, Disability Services engages in an individualized, interactive process to determine eligibility for accommodations. To evaluate requests for accommodations, Disability Services requires third-party documentation that verifies the presence of a disability and describes its functional impact. Under the ADA, a disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. A diagnosis itself is not always indicative of a disability.

Disability Services is committed to supporting students throughout this process and to maintaining the confidentiality of all information shared with our office. Students are encouraged to contact Disability Services at any time for assistance with obtaining documentation or to discuss their individual needs.

Disability Services recognizes that students may present many different types of third-party documentation depending on their diagnosis, history of using accommodations, and the specific accommodations they are requesting. Because student needs and circumstances vary widely, Disability Services accepts a range of professional documentation sources that help establish the presence of a disability and its functional impact in the collegiate environment. This document provides helpful information regarding documentation guidelines and is intended to support students, families, and providers in understanding what information is most useful in determining reasonable accommodations.

General Criteria for Third-Party Documentation:

- Provided by a licensed professional qualified to diagnose the condition and not related to the student.
- Printed on the provider's professional letterhead with their signature or submitted using the appropriate Disability Services Verification Form.
- Clearly states the diagnosed disability or condition.
- Describes current functional limitations, including how the disability affects major life activities or daily functioning.
- Addresses the severity, frequency, and duration of active symptoms.
- Lists any recommended accommodations with supporting rationale.

If existing documentation does not provide sufficient information to establish the presence of a disability or support a specific accommodation request, Disability Services may require additional documentation. While third-party documentation can help verify that a disability exists, documentation alone does not determine whether the requested accommodation is reasonable or appropriate for ensuring access.

The information provided below offers examples of third-party documentation that may be submitted to support different types of accommodation requests.

Academic Accommodation Requests

Acceptable forms of documentation may include:

- A recent IEP or 504 Plan
- A diagnostic report or psychoeducational evaluation
- Academic Verification Form completed by a qualified provider

While IEPs and 504 Plans offer helpful background information, they may not independently meet documentation criteria for postsecondary accommodations. Additional documentation such as a diagnostic evaluation or Academic Verification Form may be required to determine appropriate and reasonable supports at the college level.

Housing and Dietary Accommodation Requests

For housing and dietary accommodation requests, written letters from a student's licensed healthcare provider may be accepted if they meet the general documentation criteria outlined above. However, Disability Services strongly prefers that providers complete the Verification Form specifically designed for housing and dietary accommodations. Using these forms helps ensure that the provider includes the detailed, diagnosis-related information necessary to support the request, allows our office to review accommodations as efficiently as possible, and may prevent delays in considering the request.

Emotional Support Animal Requests

For Emotional Support Animal (ESA) requests, students are required to meet with a Disability Services team member to discuss the accommodation and review the documentation guidelines. During this meeting, the student will receive a copy of the ESA Request Form, which their licensed healthcare provider must complete to supply the necessary documentation. This process ensures that students understand the requirements for ESA accommodations and that providers are guided in submitting the detailed, disability-related information needed to support the request.

Temporary Disabilities

Students experiencing temporary conditions, such as concussions, recovery from surgery, broken limbs, or other short-term impairments, may be eligible for temporary academic support. To request assistance, students should submit the Academic Accommodation Verification Form or provide appropriate documentation from a qualified healthcare provider outlining the nature of the condition, its functional impact, and the anticipated duration of recovery. Disability Services may request periodic updates from the student's treating provider to reassess needs and adjust temporary accommodations as recovery progresses.

Professional Licensure Exams

Licensing boards, testing agencies, and other external evaluators may require their own documentation and have independent accommodation approval processes. Accommodations approved by Disability Services for academic purposes are not automatically transferred to licensure or certification examinations.

Students seeking accommodations for licensure exams are responsible for reviewing the specific requirements of the relevant testing organization. These agencies may require more extensive or specialized documentation than what is required for academic accommodations at the institution.