



GUIDELINES FOR DOCUMENTING PSYCHOLOGICAL DISABILITIES

For the purpose of determining eligibility for services, documentation must be submitted describing the current impact of the disability as it relates to the accommodation request. Such documentation will consist of an evaluation conducted by a licensed or certified professional with comprehensive training and relevant expertise in differential diagnosis of psychiatric disorders. Psychoeducational or neuropsychological testing may help to support the need for accommodations based on the potential for psychiatric disorders to interfere with cognitive performance. Documentation should substantiate the need for services based on the student's current level of functioning and reflect evidence of a substantial limitation to learning or other major life activity in order for eligibility to be determined.

To identify appropriate accommodations the documentation should include a comprehensive diagnostic/clinical evaluation that meets the criteria listed below. If there is no prior history of accommodations for psychological disability, the evaluator must include a detailed explanation of why accommodations were not needed in the past, and why they are currently requested.

- **Alternative Causes Ruled Out:**

The evaluator must demonstrate that alternative medical, neurological, or non-cognitive (e.g., educational, cultural) explanations for psychological, emotional, and/or behavioral disorder have been ruled out.

- **Currency of Documentation:**

Due to the changing nature of psychological, emotional, and behavioral disorders and syndromes, it is essential that a student provide recent and appropriate documentation from a qualified evaluator. If the diagnostic report is more than six months old, the student must submit updated information. Typically, the professional who produced the previous diagnostic report will provide this updated information. The letter will include an update of the diagnosis, a description of the student's current level of functioning during the preceding six months, and a rationale for the requested accommodations. Continuation of services will be based on updated information from the evaluator and any other current and relevant provider of health care.

- **Statement of Presenting Problem:**

A history of the individual's present symptoms should be indicated in a comprehensive diagnostic report that includes the following information:

- A specific diagnosis
- Developmental history
- Family history and other educational, learning, physical, or psychological difficulties deemed relevant by the examiner
- Relevant medical and medication history, including the student's current medication regimen compliance, side effects, and response to medication
- Relevant psychosocial history and any relevant interventions
- Description of an active treatment plan
- Description of current functional limitations in different academic related settings that are a direct result of the diagnosed disability
- Relevant history prior to therapy
- Duration and severity of the disorder
- A description of the expected progression or stability of the condition over time

The diagnostic report should be on letterhead, dated and signed, indicating the certification or licensure of the evaluator. The report should include a summary of the diagnostic interview, any tests administered with subtest and standard scores, a description of the nature and severity of the substantial limitation to learning (or other major life activity), the specific diagnosis, a description of the student's history and recommended academic accommodations and rationale to support them. Further documentation may be requested in order to designate the most appropriate and reasonable form of accommodation.



To the professional:

To assist Austin College in determining a student's eligibility for accommodations for a disability, please provide the following information about his/her disability on your professional letterhead.

- Student's name
- Date of evaluation and/or last contact
- Diagnosis and history (e.g., symptoms, age at onset, procedures used to assess or diagnose the disorder); full psychoeducational or neuropsychological evaluation report, preferably less than three years old (for more information see specific Guidelines for Documentation)
- Thorough academic history of elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education
- Developmental and family history identifying relevant educational, learning, physical, or psychological difficulties
- Summary of procedures used to assess or diagnose the disorder, including all scores
- Alternative causes should be ruled out (e.g., psychological, medical, or non-cognitive explanations for hyperactivity, impulsivity, or attentional problems)
- Nature of impairment(s) on major life activities (must include evidence of current impairment and limitations in the academic setting)
- Level of severity of the impairment(s) (mild, moderate, or severe)
- Stability of impairment and recommended interval for re-evaluation
- Duration of treatment and frequency of contact
- Medication(s) and other treatments
- Strengths in an academic setting
- Recommended accommodations and rationale to support them
- Additional comments or relevant information
- Your name, address, phone number, and information about your licensure or certification, degree, training, area(s) of specialization, etc.

Please send the above information to:

Laura Márquez Ramsey,
Director, Academic Skills Center
Austin College
900 N Grand Ste 61544
Sherman TX 75090