Psychological Disability Documentation Guidelines for Service Eligibility & Determination

In order to establish eligibility for support services and/or reasonable accommodations, students must provide comprehensive disability documentation on official letterhead from a professional licensed or certified in the diagnosis and treatment of psychological/psychiatric disabilities (e.g., medical doctor, psychiatrist, neuropsychologist, therapist). Documentation should be current and is intended to provide information on the present functional impact of the disability.

Comprehensive disability documentation should include:

- Diagnosis and relevant codes from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders.
- Frequency, duration, and severity of symptoms in more than one setting, distinguishing the disability as a significant impairment in a major life activity, rather than behavior which may be considered developmentally normal (e.g., test anxiety, disorganization).
- History of the condition and related symptoms.
- If relevant, provide information about the cyclical or episodic nature of the condition.
- Observational data from the evaluation.
- Self-report rating scales may be used in conjunction with other data.
- As mental illness may affect cognitive performance, test scores from a psychoeducational assessment (e.g., cognitive, achievement, attentional measures) are sometimes helpful in clarifying the present functional impact of the disability.
- Interpretation of evaluation results including current functional limitations that are a direct result of the disability, an explanation as to why differential diagnoses were ruled out, and any safety concerns.
- Information regarding student’s prognosis (e.g., progression of symptoms or stability) and anticipated length of time student’s academic achievement will be impacted? (e.g., 3 months)
- Relevant information regarding current and future treatment or therapy.
- Information regarding medications the student is currently taking, their effect in lessening symptoms, and any side effects experienced by the student.
- Information on previous accommodations and how these supported equal access needs.
- Specific recommendations and rationale regarding accommodations and/or services believed to be necessary for equal access.

These standards of acceptable documentation are designed to provide the staff of Services for Students with Disabilities with meaningful insights into the strengths, weaknesses, and disability-related needs of the students who seek our assistance. They have been developed in line with the professional practices of post-secondary education. Services for Students with Disabilities reserves the right to share this information with the student and appropriate individuals in the University Health Services and Counseling Center, as well as periodically require updated documentation.

S: Disability Documentation Guidelines
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