

Guidelines Regarding Documentation of a Psychological/Psychiatric Disability

The following guidelines are provided to help assure that the documentation is appropriate for verifying eligibility. Documentation presented to Disability Support Services should be filed in a private, confidential file in the DSS office. The cost and responsibility for providing this information **shall be borne by the student**. The Coordinator for DSS is available to consult with psychologist(s) or psychiatrist(s) regarding these guidelines.

The documentation must be prepared by a *licensed professional* (e.g. psychologist or psychiatrist). Additional information may be necessary from other health care providers, such as but not limited to therapists, neuropsychologist, physicians, etc.

The documentation should demonstrate the individual has a disability in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. It should also provide sufficient data to support the particular academic adjustment(s) requested. Since the documentation provided constitutes the basis for determining accommodations, it is in a student's best interest to **provide recent and appropriate documentation** to serve as the basis for decision making about a student's need for accommodations in an academically competitive environment.

The following guidelines are provided in the interest of assuring that the evaluations and reports are appropriate for documenting eligibility and identifying and determining reasonable accommodations. The documentation should include:

- A diagnosis that is consistent with the diagnostic criteria found in the *American Psychiatric Association: Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition* (DSM- IV) or successive editions;
- How long the diagnostician has treated the student and the date of last contact (due to the nature of some psychological and psychiatric disorders, updated reports may be requested);
- A summary of assessment procedures and evaluation instruments used to make the diagnosis, including evaluation results and standardized scores if applicable;
- A description of the diagnosis, and the type and severity of current symptoms;
- A summary of how the disability impacts the student in the postsecondary educational environment;
- A description of treatments, medications, assistive devices/services currently prescribed or in use;
- Information regarding existing side effects of medication on the student's ability to meet the demands of the postsecondary educational environment (e.g. physical, perceptual, behavioral, or cognitive);
- A description of the expected progression or stability of the disability over time.

Documentation should be on professional letterhead, signed by the professional and include the licensed professional's title, license number, address, and phone number.

Suggestions regarding academic adjustments, auxiliary aids and services may be included; however, the final determination rests with the Disability Support Services office.

If there are questions regarding documentation, please contact the Program Coordinator for Disability Support Services at (206) 281-2272.