

THE UNIVERSITY OF DENVER – Disability Services Program (DSP)

Guidelines for Providing Documentation of Disability/ Medical Issues

In order to receive disability/medical-related accommodations and/or services from University of Denver, students are required to submit documentation of disability to verify eligibility under the Americans with Disabilities Act, the ADA Amendments Act (ADA AA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and University of Denver Disability Services Program (DSP) policy. For these purposes, disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Major life activities include, but are not limited to, caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and working.

Documentation of disability/medical issue assists the University of Denver DSP staff in collaborating with the student to determine reasonable accommodations and/or services, which are provided on a case-by-case basis. If the submitted documentation is incomplete or does not support the student's request for accommodations and/or services, the student may be asked to provide additional documentation. For example, an Individualized Education Plan, 504 Plan, or Summary of Performance from a secondary school without supporting information generally is not considered to be sufficient documentation. The cost of obtaining all documentation is borne by the student.

Documentation, along with the "Request for Accommodations" form in the DSP Student Intake packet, should be submitted to DSP early enough to allow staff sufficient time to review the request and implement reasonable accommodations and/or services. (Note: requests for accommodations in DU housing and/or meal plans will be reviewed by a committee comprised of DSP, Housing and Residential Education (HRE), Health and Counseling Center (HCC) and other DU departments/staff if needed.)

Students are encouraged to contact DSP for guidance on the documentation needed for their individual situations.

In general, documentation should include the following:

1. *The credentials of the evaluator(s)*

Documentation must be provided by a licensed or otherwise properly credentialed professional who has undergone appropriate and comprehensive training, has relevant experience, and has no personal relationship with the individual being evaluated. The individual making the diagnosis must be qualified to do so (e.g., an orthopedic limitation might be documented by a physician, but not a licensed psychologist).

Documentation should be provided on official letterhead with the name, title, professional credentials, address, phone number, and signature of the evaluator, as well as the date of the report.

2. *A diagnostic statement identifying the disability*

Documentation should include a clear diagnostic statement. While diagnostic codes from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) or the International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health (ICF) of the World Health Organization are helpful, a full clinical description may also convey the necessary information.

3. *As appropriate to the disability, a description of the diagnostic methodology used*

Generally, documentation should include a description of the diagnostic criteria, evaluation methods, procedures, tests, and dates of administration, as well as observations, specific results, and a clinical narrative. Where appropriate to the nature of the disability, both summary data and specific test results, including subtest and index scores, should be provided.

Diagnostic methods that are congruent with the particular disability and current professional practices in the field are recommended. For example, assessments for learning disabilities should include at least one measure of aptitude and measures of achievement in reading, math, and written language.

4. *A description of the current functional limitations*

Information on how the disability currently affects the individual provides useful information for identifying reasonable accommodations. The documentation should be thorough enough to demonstrate whether and how a major life activity is substantially limited by providing a clear sense of the severity, frequency, and pervasiveness of the condition.

The age of acceptable documentation is dependent upon the disability. While relatively recent documentation is recommended in most circumstances, older documentation for conditions that are permanent or non-varying may be appropriate. Likewise, changing conditions and/or changes in how the condition affects the individual brought on by growth and development may warrant more frequent updates in order to provide an accurate picture of the current status of the student (e.g., learning disabilities, attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder, psychological disorders, and chronic health conditions).

5. *A description of the expected progression or stability of the disability*

It is helpful when documentation provides information on expected changes in the functional impact of the disability over time and with context. Information on the cyclical or episodic nature of the disability and known or suspected environmental triggers to episodes provides opportunities to anticipate and plan for varying functional impacts and the need for reasonable accommodations and/or services.

6. *A description of current and past accommodations, services, and/or medications*

A description of current and past accommodations, services, and/or medications will assist the Disability Services Program staff in determining appropriate accommodations and/or services. A discussion of any significant side effects from current medications that may affect physical, perceptual, behavioral, or cognitive performance is also helpful. While accommodations and/or services provided in another setting are not binding at the University of Denver, this information may provide insight for making decisions for reasonable accommodations and/or services.

7. *Recommendations for accommodations and/or services*

Recommendations for reasonable accommodations and/or services that are logically related to functional limitations provide valuable information for the review and planning process. University of Denver, however, will make the final determination of reasonable accommodations and/or services.

These guidelines are based on the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) best practices for documentation (<http://www.ahead.org/resources/best-practices-resources/elements>).

Students should keep a copy of the documentation for their personal records. The Disability Services Program destroys documentation and other disability-related information five years after a student leaves the institution.

All documentation and the "Request for Disability Support Services Form" should be submitted by the student to the Disability Services Program:

Mailing Address:

Disability Services Program
The University of Denver
1999 E. Evans Ave., 4th floor
Denver, CO 80208

303-871-2278/2372 Phone
303-871-2248 FAX
www.du.edu/disability/dsp

Please note that documentation accepted by the University of Denver might not be accepted by other institutions, agencies, and/or programs (e.g., testing agencies, licensure exams, and certification programs). Please check with the specific organizations and/or programs to determine their documentation requirements.

For additional information or to receive this document in an alternate format, please contact the Disability Services Program.