



### **GUIDELINES FOR DOCUMENTATION OF A DISABILITY**

#### **Psychological Disabilities, ADD/ADHD, and Learning Disabilities**

Students who are seeking support services from the Disability Access Services at Spokane Community College (SCC) based on a disability are required, in most cases, to submit documentation to verify eligibility of services. Documentation of disability and related information will be kept in a secure file in the Disability Access Services. The cost and responsibility for providing this documentation shall be borne by the student.

The provision of all accommodations and auxiliary aids is based upon the indication that the accommodation or aid is appropriate to the needs and capabilities of the student. Therefore, it is in the student's best interest to provide current and appropriate documentation relevant to the student's learning environment.

Ideal documentation will:

- Clearly state the names, titles, professional credentials, addresses, and phone numbers of the evaluators, indicate date(s) of testing/examination, and be on official letterhead, typed, dated and signed.
- Include a diagnostic statement identifying the disability, describing the "nature and extent" of the disability, date of the current diagnostic evaluation, and the date of the original diagnosis.
- Be current, typically within the last three years. The age of acceptable documentation is dependent upon the disabling condition, its interaction with development across the life span, the presence or absence of significant events (since the original diagnosis) that would impact functioning, and the current condition of the disability at the time of the request for accommodation.
- Include a summary of the evaluation procedures as well as the name of diagnostic tests and evaluation results used to make the diagnosis. For learning disabilities, a grade level equivalency and I.Q. assessment are required.
- Provide a description of the current functional impact or limitations of the disability on learning or other major life activities. Address the student's ability to function effectively in a college environment (e.g., ability to focus on assignments, organize one's time, attend class, work in groups and alone, do independent research, and take projects to completion).
- Address the anticipated duration of the functional impact or limitations of the disability.
- When appropriate, address the relevance of accommodation requests to the diagnosed disability.
- When appropriate, include treatment, medication, and assistive devices currently prescribed or in use. Discuss the possible side-effects of medications, if needed for identification of appropriate educational services.

***Please see reverse side for additional specific guidelines.***

## Documentation Guidelines

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In addition to the requirements noted above, certain disabilities may have additional guidelines as outlined below:

**Psychological Disabilities:** Documentation must include the DSM-IV diagnosis and a summary of present symptoms, in a written report from a “qualified medical professional” (i.e., licensed psychiatrist or licensed psychologist). Describe what effects the disability has on the student’s ability to access the educational process.

**Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder:** Documentation must include a statement of the presenting problem; history or testing that verifies a pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity/impulsivity that currently affects learning; identification of DSM-IV criteria for ADHD; report summary and rationales for accommodations using evidence from the evaluation. Documentation must be in a written report from a “qualified medical professional” (i.e., licensed physicians, neuropsychologists, and psychologists).

**Learning Disabilities:** Documentation should validate the need for services based on the individual's current functioning in the educational setting. A school plan such as an individualized education plan (IEP) or a 504 plan is insufficient documentation, but it can be included as part of a more comprehensive assessment battery. A comprehensive assessment battery and the resulting diagnostic report should include a diagnostic interview, assessment of aptitude, academic achievement, information processing, and a diagnosis. Assessment, and any resulting diagnosis, should consist of and be based on a comprehensive assessment battery, which does not rely on any one test or sub test.

Documentation should present clear and specific evidence which identifies specific learning disabilities and reflects the individual’s present level of functioning in processing and intelligence, as well as achievement in written expression, writing mechanics, vocabulary, grammar and spelling, reading comprehension, fluency and rate. Individual "learning styles," "learning differences," "academic problems," and "test difficulty or anxiety," in and of themselves, do not constitute a learning disability. The tests used should be reliable, valid and standardized for use with an adolescent/adult population.

The following professionals would generally be considered qualified to evaluate specific learning disabilities - an individual who has completed a course of study and is licensed to practice in a field of health care which includes the diagnoses and assessment of the learning disabilities and/or whose training and background qualifies them to diagnose learning disabilities, which would include but not be limited to: a licensed neuropsychologist or psychologist, learning disability specialist, or other appropriate professional certified to administer class “c” psychological tests. Experience in the evaluation of adults with learning disabilities is essential.

## Authority & Confidentially

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Authority is assigned to the Disability Access Services for reviewing student documentation and determining what, if any, accommodations will be provided by the college to ensure equal access for all students.

All contact information and documentation received is kept in confidential files within the Disability Access Services. Information from the file is provided on a "need to know" basis only, at the student's request, or with a signed consent.

Documentation must have been prepared by a person who is not a family member of the student and who is qualified by professional training and practice to diagnose and treat the impairment leading to the disability. It must also be typed or word processed and printed on the letterhead of either the practitioner or the agency hosting the practice.

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