

DOCUMENTATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH/PSYCHOLOGICAL DISABILITIES

Psychological disabilities are defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 as “any mental or psychological disorder, such as mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities.” The disability must be diagnosed, documented, and substantially limit one or more major life activity. In order to receive appropriate accommodations, the diagnosis must clearly link the impact of the disability to the individual’s functional limitations. Therefore, accommodations will vary among individuals based on the impact of the disability.

Diagnosis by a licensed mental health professional, including licensed clinical social workers, licensed professional counselors, psychologists, psychiatrists, and certified addiction counselors (when applicable), is required and must include the licensee number. The diagnostician must be an impartial individual who is not a family member nor in a dual relationship with the student.

Diagnoses may include, but are not limited to, depressive disorders, OCD, post-traumatic stress disorder, bipolar disorder, dissociative disorders, and rehabilitated alcohol and other drug addiction. Individuals with these disorders may exhibit problems in the following areas:

- Cognition: memory, concentration, self-talk time management
- Behavior: impulsivity, repetitive motion, pacing, maintaining stamina
- Perception: auditory or visual hallucinations
- Socialization: lack of affect, fear or anxiety, rambling or halting speech
- Medication side effects: drowsiness, fatigue, and hand tremors

Reasonable accommodations will be determined based on the documentation submitted. Required documentation must include:

- A typed, clear statement of the disability, including the DSM diagnosis
- Relevant history
- Summary of present symptoms, fluctuating symptoms and prognosis
- A summary of assessment procedures and evaluation instruments used to make the diagnosis, including evaluation results and standardized scores, if applicable
- Medical information relating to student’s needs, including the impact of medication on the student’s ability to meet the demands of the post-secondary environment
- A statement of the functional impact or limitations of the disability on learning or other major life activity and the degree to which it impacts the individual in the learning context for which the accommodations are being requested
- Suggestions for appropriate accommodations as substantiated by the diagnosis and limitations described above.