

General Documentation Guidelines

All disability eligibility and accommodation decisions are made on a case-by-case basis.

To establish disability status and eligibility for services, schools in the University System of Georgia require documentation from a qualified evaluator that:

- Addresses the presence of a disabling condition **as defined by the ADA and**
- Demonstrates **substantial limitations** impacting performance in the academic environment **when compared to most people in the general population.**

Documentation is used to determine eligibility for disability services and to inform accommodation decision-making.

General documentation guidelines pertain to **all** disabilities. The following are provided to guide evaluators, students, and family members as they seek to document a disability under the ADA.

Appropriate evaluators:

- Evaluators must be qualified professionals whose training and credentials are **consistent with expertise in the disability for which they provide documentation** and/or eligibility classification under the IDEA/Section 504.
- Evaluators may not be friends or family members of the student.

Documentation of a physical and/or mental impairment:

- A diagnostic statement based on the most current Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) and/or International Classification of Diseases (ICD) should be included, *unless the evaluator is unable to do so due to school system regulations.*
- Should demonstrate how the assessment results meet diagnostic criteria.
- Progression of the condition should be detailed if its impact on the student's functioning is expected to change over time.
- Because diagnostic methodologies vary by disorder, further guidance for meeting this requirement can be found in the specific guidelines.

Documentation of a current substantial limitation in a major life activity

- Substantial limitation in a major life activity should be described.
- **Quantitative and qualitative information** should be used to demonstrate that the difficulties are **substantially limiting when compared to most people in the general population.**
- Evidence the difficulties are substantially limiting to the student in the academic environment.
- Because substantial limitations may vary by disorder, further guidance for meeting this requirement can be found in the specific guidelines.
- *In some cases, documentation of a current substantial limitation in the educational domain may be difficult to produce due to use of effective accommodations and interventions.* In such cases, the documentation of the substantial limitation should include **a description of the substantially limited abilities and skills, the accommodations and interventions implemented to address those limitations, the degree of the effectiveness of each, and justification for continued need.**

Accommodation recommendations:

- Any recommendations made *must be supported by a rationale that explains the necessity based on the measured impairments and current substantial limitations.*
- Documentation of accommodations approved in the past is encouraged, **but does not guarantee approval** at the postsecondary level.

Identifying information of the evaluating professional:

- Identifying information includes the **names, signatures, titles, identifying credentials (e.g., license numbers), and contact information** of evaluating professionals.
- Dates of evaluations must be included.

Recency:

- In order to determine eligibility for disability services and provide the most appropriate accommodations and services, documentation should provide an adequate representation of the student's **current** functional abilities. Professional judgment will be used in determining the acceptability of any documentation provided.

Provisional accommodations:

- For students with a **documented history** of disability whose documentation fails to meet USG guidelines, institutions are encouraged to provide accommodations provisionally for a period (usually **one semester**) that would be reasonably sufficient for the student to gather the necessary information.

Other disabilities:

- Disabilities as defined by the ADA that are not covered by the guidelines described above may be eligible for accommodations within USG policies. For more information, please contact the disability services office or other designated office at the USG institution in which you are enrolled or seeking services.

These criteria are established by the University System of Georgia Board of Regents. If you have any questions, please contact Augusta University's Testing and Disability Services at (706) 737-1469. Thank you.