



Office of Accessibility Services
120 Bloomfield Avenue, Caldwell, NJ 07006
Phone 973-618-3645

Documentation Guidelines

Students seeking disability services through the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) on the basis of diagnosis of a neurological impairment, psychiatric disorder, or medical impairment are required to submit documentation to verify eligibility under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 as amended.

Secondary schools and postsecondary institutions are governed under different laws with regard to providing services to students with disabilities. A prior history of accommodation does not warrant the provision of a similar accommodation at the postsecondary level. A student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or a 504 Plan is seldom sufficient documentation to establish the rationale for academic adjustments, auxiliary aids or services in the postsecondary setting. However, an IEP or 504 Plan may accompany primary documentation of a disability which may include psychological, educational, neurological medical, psychiatric and other relevant evaluation reports. Please see the OAS Documentation Guideline document for documentation timelines.

Neurological Impairment

Documentation of neurological impairments must include a report from a neurologist or other qualified medical doctor. It is important to understand that a diagnosis of a neurological condition in and of itself does not substantiate a disability. In other words, information sufficient to render a diagnosis might not be adequate to determine that an individual is substantially impaired in a major life activity. Current (within one year) and comprehensive documentation must be provided in order for a student to be eligible for support services and be considered protected under the law.

The following guidelines (see below) are provided in the interest of assuring that documentation is appropriate to verify eligibility and support requests for reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or services in the post-secondary setting.

Psychiatric Disorders

Documentation of psychiatric disorders must include a report from a psychiatrist or qualified clinical psychologist. Psychiatric Disorders Professionals conducting assessments rendering a diagnoses of psychiatric disorders must be trained in differential diagnosis and the full range of psychiatric conditions. The following professionals are considered qualified to evaluate and

diagnose psychiatric disorders provided they have comprehensive training in differential diagnosis and direct experience with adolescent and/or adult populations: licensed clinical psychologists and psychiatrists. Use of diagnostic terminology indicating a psychiatric disorder by someone without training and experience in these fields is not acceptable. The following guidelines (see below) are provided in the interest of assuring that documentation is appropriate to verify eligibility and support requests for reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or services in the post-secondary setting.

Medical Impairment

Documentation of medical impairments must include a report from a healthcare professional that is qualified to make the diagnosis in question. The report must reflect the current limitations of the impairment (documentation for mobility impairments may require periodic updates, especially if changes occur in the student's functioning). In addition, documentation of mobility impairments must fully explain the following aspects of the student's impairment (if applicable). The following guidelines (see below) are provided in the interest of assuring that documentation is appropriate to verify eligibility and support requests for reasonable accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or services in the post-secondary setting.

DOCUMENTATION GUIDELINES - Clerical Requirements

All diagnostic reports must include the names, titles, licensure and professional credentials of the evaluators and include the signature of the professionals and the dates of testing/assessments. The report must be typed and submitted on professional letterhead complete with address and telephone number. Specific reporting format is left to the professional; however, the required components must be clearly presented and easily discernable. Handwritten diagnostic reports are not acceptable.

Documentation of neurological impairments must include a report from a neurologist or other qualified medical doctor. Documentation of psychiatric disorders must include a report from a psychiatrist or qualified clinical psychologist. Documentation of medical impairments must include a report from a healthcare professional that is qualified to make the diagnosis in question.

Information that is more than a year old may be considered as out of date depending on the student's age, student's age at time of assessment and the nature of the diagnosis. The report must reflect the current functional limitations of the impairment (documentation for neurological impairments may require periodic updates, especially if changes occur in the student's functioning).

- Diagnosis
- Duration (chronic, episodic, or short-term) of the impairment

- History of the impairment and the symptoms related to the impairment
- Severity (mild, moderate, or severe) and an explanation of the severity
- Dates and frequency of contacts with the student/patient
- Explanation of how the impairment limits the student's functioning for the college environment
- Detailed explanation of how the impairment limits the student's functioning for the college environment
- List of the student's relevant current medication (dosage, frequency, and adverse side effects) and an explanation of the extent medication mitigates the symptoms of the disorder
- Specific recommendations regarding academic adjustments, housing accommodations, auxiliary aids, and/or services are warranted based upon the student's functional limitations
- Indication as to the reason the stated academic adjustments, housing, accommodations, auxiliary aids, and/or services are necessary if the current treatments are successful
- Information regarding situations that may exacerbate the student's impairment

Documentation Retention

All submitted materials will be held in the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) office as educational records under the Family Educational Rights Privacy Act (FERPA). Students have a right to review their educational record. However, students are encouraged to retain their own copies of disability documentation for future use, as the university is not obligated to produce copies for students. Under current New Jersey record retention requirements, disability documentation is mandated to be held for only two years after a student has stopped attending the college. Please contact the OAS if you are interested in removing your file or if you require copies of your documentation.