



Documentation Guidelines for Academic Accommodations

Colby Sawyer students requesting academic accommodation(s) are required to submit documentation prior to receiving accommodations or services in Access Resources. Documentation is evaluated by professional staff and accommodation requests are approached on an individual basis. These guidelines describe the necessary components for acceptable documentation and are designed to be helpful to students and their evaluators.

Current and incoming students who do not have a documented disability, do not meet the suggested guidelines, or have documentation over 3 years old, should still schedule a meeting with the Director of Access Resources. No student should delay initiating the request even if the appropriate paperwork is not yet available.

General Documentation Guidelines

Students who wish to request academic accommodations should submit documentation that:

- Is current and relevant.
- States the current disability, relevant medical, developmental, cognitive, and or psychosocial history, including diagnosis and diagnostic code(s).
- Describes the current functional limitations experienced as a result of the condition illustrating how the student's disability presents substantial limitations on one or more life experiences in an academic setting.
- Discusses recommended accommodations and rationale that directly ties the accommodation(s) need to the functional limitations of the disability.

Secondary school accommodation plans such as an IEP or 504 Plan are helpful, but often do not provide sufficient information to establish eligibility for accommodations at the college level if they are submitted without current supporting documentation.

Professionals Who Can Provide Documentation

Professionals issuing the documentation must have comprehensive training and be experienced in the relevant specialty and certified or licensed. The documentation must be printed on letterhead, dated, signed, and include the professional's current contact information. Redacted information will not be included in the evaluation.

Documentation from a family member or someone with a personal relationship with the student (regardless of training or licensure) will not be accepted.

Specific Documentation Guidelines

Providing additional information specific to a student's disability provides valuable insight and helps us more quickly and accurately determine the unique needs of each student.

Organized by disability category, the following guidelines assist students and their health care providers in preparing appropriate documentation to support the student's requests. Please follow all the General Guidelines above as well as the following:

Documentation for Autism Spectrum Disorders

Evaluators considered qualified to submit documentation: developmental pediatricians, neurologists, clinical psychologists, neuropsychologists, psychiatrists, or other qualified medical doctors.

The assessment should examine and discuss the possibility of co-existing and/or alternative diagnoses, including psychological and learning disorders.

Each accommodation recommended by the evaluator must include a rationale. All recommended accommodations should be directly tied to the anticipated academic environment.

Documentation for Attention Deficit Disorders (ADD) or Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorders (ADHD)

Evaluators considered qualified to submit documentation: clinical psychologists, neuropsychologists, psychiatrists, or other qualified medical doctors.

Evidence of early impairment and developmental and academic history or, if not relevant, an explanation of factors that delayed the diagnosis and/or the request for accommodations.

A diagnostic assessment should consist of more than a self-report. A history of symptoms, ongoing impulsive/hyperactive or inattentive behavior should be discussed. In addition, please include the severity and frequency of the symptoms and the impact the symptoms have on the student in and out of the classroom.

The assessment should include the possibility of co-existing and/or alternative diagnoses, including medical and psychiatric disorders, as well as cultural and educational factors, which may impact the individual and could result in behaviors mimicking ADD/ADHD.

Each accommodation recommended by the evaluator must include a rationale. All recommended accommodation would be directly tied to the anticipated academic environment.

Documentation for Learning Disabilities

Evaluators considered qualified to submit documentation include clinical psychologists, educational psychologists, school psychologists, and neuropsychologists.

Documentation should:

- Contain a specific diagnosis with current DSM diagnostic criteria.
- Be recent enough to provide an accurate, current description of the disability's impact (typically not more than 4 years old); this determination will be made case-by-case.
- Include cognitive and achievement assessments with the results of subtests and a narrative summary.
- Provide a list of recommended accommodations to help alleviate the symptoms or functional limitations of the disability and detail how each accommodation is directly tied to the anticipated academic environment.

Documentation for Physical and Chronic Medical Disabilities

The medical profession providing documentation should have comprehensive training in the relevant specialty.

The appropriate age of the documentation depends on the disabling condition, if it is permanent or will change over time, and the request for accommodations. Generally, documentation should not be more than a year old. If the disability is permanent, for example, a life-long disability, (diabetes, cerebral palsy), the documentation may not need to be as recent but recommendations for the college environment should be provided by the evaluator.

Discussion of the student's condition (if it is static or changing) with specific accommodation recommendations tied to the student's current limitations. All recommendations must include a rationale.

Documentation for Psychiatric/Psychological Disabilities

Evaluators considered qualified to submit documentation: psychologists, neuropsychologists, psychiatrists, and other relevantly trained medical doctors.

The documentation should:

- Generally not be more than a year old and should address the students' current level of functioning as well as an assessment of the current impact of the student's disability on academic performance.
- Provide a discussion addressing the changing or static nature of the condition.
- Contain a review of accommodations used in the past and their individual impact.
- Provide a list of recommended accommodations to help alleviate the symptoms or functional limitations of the disability and detail how each accommodation is directly tied to the anticipated academic environment.