



Disability and Access

Guidelines for Documenting a Physical or Medical Disability

Students seeking support services from Disability and Access (D&A) on the basis of a previously diagnosed physical disability or medical condition must submit documentation that verifies their eligibility under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act. The documentation must describe a disabling condition, which is defined by the presence of *significant* limitations in one or more major life activities. Merely submitting evidence of a diagnosis is not sufficient to warrant academic accommodations. Documentation from a recognized agency as being eligible for services, for example the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), may be considered, but specific accommodation requests may require the documentation outlined below. A verification form is also available to provide guidance in the assessment process. Please do not hesitate to contact D&A at (512) 471-6259 if you have any questions.

A physician, or other medical specialist with experience and expertise in the area related to the student's disability, should make the diagnosis. Conditions may include, but are not limited to, mobility impairments, multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, chemical sensitivities, spinal cord injuries, cancer, AIDS, muscular dystrophy, spina bifida, diabetes, asthma, etc. The diagnostician should not be a family member of the student. Documentation should include:

1. **Diagnosis:** A clear statement of the physical disability or medical condition.
 - a. Approximate onset of diagnosis
 - b. Date of last clinical contact: *The assessment must be current.* Because conditions may change over time current evaluations are critical in providing reasonable accommodations. In general, this means that evaluations must have been completed **within the three years prior to the accommodations request.** In cases where a condition is permanent and unchanging (e.g. cerebral palsy, amputation, etc.) D&A may require a current statement of functional limitations from a qualified provider.
2. **Evaluation**
 - a. Assessment procedures and evaluation instruments that have been used to make the diagnosis.
 - b. Narrative of evaluation results including standardized scores, if applicable.
 - c. Present symptoms that meet the criteria for the diagnosis.
 - d. Current treatment
 - e. Severity of symptoms

f. Prognosis of disorder

3. **Functional Limitations:** *Should be determined WITHOUT consideration of mitigating measures (i.e. medication, etc.). If condition is episodic in nature, level of functioning should be assessed based on active phase of symptoms.*

a. Impact on major life activities

b. Behavioral manifestations of the disability, in particular the way it impacts the student in the learning context for which the accommodations are being requested.

c. Any additional limitation that fall in the substantial range.

d. Special considerations (e.g. medication side effects, impact of treatment, etc.)

4. **Accommodations**

a. History of accommodations

b. (Optional) Recommended accommodations

c. (Optional) Additional information that may be helpful in determining accommodations.

Further assessment by an appropriate professional may be required if co-existing learning disabilities or other disabling conditions are indicated. All documentation must be submitted on the official letterhead of the professional describing the disability. The report should be dated and signed and include the name, title, and professional credentials of the evaluator, including information about license or certification. Disability and Access will make the determination regarding whether accommodations are reasonable in the University environment.

All documentation is considered confidential and can be mailed or faxed to:

The University of Texas at Austin
Division of Diversity and Community Engagement
Disability and Access
100 W. Dean Keeton St. Stop A4100
Austin, Texas 78712-1093

Fax: (512) 475-7730