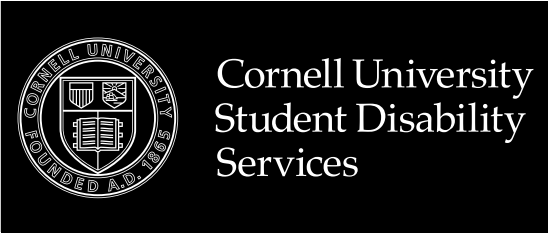


Student Disability Services

Student Disability Services



*Services for
Equal Access*

Disability documentation content (cont.)

- *Description of the current functional impact of the disability*

Provide a comprehensive description of the impact of the condition on the student in an academic environment and other life settings including the severity, frequency and pervasiveness of the symptoms. This description must provide evidence that the student is substantially impaired in one or more major life activities. Documentation must be current (within six months).

- *Treatment/medication and prognosis*

Describe the impact of medication and/or treatment and the anticipated prognosis. If relevant, provide information about the cyclical or episodic nature of the condition.

- *Accommodation recommendations*

It is helpful for the evaluator to recommend accommodations or services in an academic setting that will address the functional impact of the condition. Accommodation recommendations should be directly connected to the limitations caused by the condition. If accommodations have been used in the past, include a description of the accommodations and information regarding their efficacy. Accommodations are provided to modify, adjust or eliminate a barrier to a course or program to ensure equitable access.

.....
 • **SDS Diversity Statement** •
 • The staff of Student Disability Services strives to •
 • create and sustain a welcoming, accessible, and •
 • supportive environment. We believe that diversity •
 • strengthens our institution and envision a community •
 • free of bigotry, expressions of hatred or prejudice, •
 • and behaviors that infringe upon the freedom and •
 • respect that every individual deserves. We are •
 • committed to expanding our understanding of the •
 • complex issues surrounding identity in order to •
 • advance the notion "Any person ... any study." •
 •
 •

Psychological Disabilities Documentation Guidelines

Student Disability Services

420 Comp. & Comm. Ctr.
 Garden Ave. Ext.
 Ithaca, NY 14853
 Phone: 607 254-4545 (voice)
 Deaf/HoH: via 711 Relay
 Fax: 607 255-1562
 E-mail: sds_cu@cornell.edu
www.sds.cornell.edu

Alternative formats of this brochure are available upon request.

Psychological Disabilities Documentation Guidelines

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 protect individuals with disabilities from discrimination and mandate the availability of accommodations to ameliorate the impact of the disability to afford equal access to education. Students registered with Student Disability Services (SDS) must meet the statutory definition of disability under these federal laws. In order to determine whether an individual is entitled to these protections, SDS requires objective evidence (documentation) that verifies that the individual's condition fits the definition of "disability."

The ADA defines disability as:

- a. a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such individual,
- b. a record of having such an impairment, or
- c. being regarded as having such an impairment.

A condition is considered a disability if it prevents or substantially limits the ability to perform a major life activity or significantly restricts the condition, manner or duration in performing the major life activity as compared to the average person. The analysis of "substantially limits" is a comparative term to the average person in severity, impact and duration. Generally a condition must be substantially limiting for more than several months. A condition is not a disability if it results in mild limitations.

Disability documentation serves two primary purposes:

1. To establish right to protection from discrimination.

Non-discrimination is an assurance that individuals with disabilities will not be excluded or provided lesser access to programs and activities based on assumptions rooted in stereotype or perception of ability that are not based in fact. Non-discrimination also provides freedom from harassment based on perceptions of disability.

Documentation needed for protection from discrimination based on disability without a request for accommodation can be quite brief. A diagnostic statement from an appropriate professional, a past history of recognition as a person with a disability or even self-identification that indicates how others might regard the individual as having a disability could suffice as the basis for protection from discrimination.

2. To determine the accommodations to which the individual may be entitled.

Reasonable accommodations include modifications to policy, procedure or practice and the provision of auxiliary aids and services that are designed to provide equal access to programs and services for qualified individuals with disabilities. Accommodations are reasonable when they

Student Disability Services

do not fundamentally alter the nature of a program or service and do not represent an undue financial or administrative burden.

Disability documentation must include the following elements:

- *Credentials of the evaluator*

Disability documentation must be provided by a licensed or credentialed professional with relevant training and experience. The name, title and professional credentials of the evaluator should be clearly stated in the documentation. Reports should be on letterhead, typed, dated and signed.

Disability documentation may not be provided by an individual who has a personal relationship with the student.

- *Statement of diagnosis*

Disability documentation must include a current diagnostic (DSM-IV Axis I and Axis II required) statement.

- *Description of the diagnostic methodology*

The documentation must include a description of the diagnostic criteria for the condition and the evaluation method used to render a diagnosis, including medical examinations, formal testing instruments, structured interviews, and observations. The dates of administration must be included and a history of the presenting symptoms.