



Providing Disability Information and Documentation

Guidelines for You

Being able to clearly describe your condition, its impact and your needs is important. Practicing this skill will help you to work with your future college counselor to identify needed equipment and services, establish appropriate accommodations, and develop compensatory strategies. The following questions will help you prepare to describe your condition, its impacts and your needs. Review them with your transition team, counselor, parents, and others who can help you anticipate the accommodations and services you will need in college. You may want to write notes to help you present your requests and explain your needs when you meet with your disabilities counselor at college.

How do you describe your condition?

How do you describe your condition and how do you want it described to others? You may choose to keep information about your disability confidential. The disability services office will need to have enough information to evaluate the need for accommodations and services. Instructors need considerably less information and may be told as little as which accommodations are appropriate. Even if your disability is not visible or obvious it is likely that at some point a few of your new friends and classmates will notice an accommodation; how will you describe your situation to them?

What is the impact of your condition?

It is helpful to think about how your condition has impacted you in various situations in the past, then to consider how it is likely to impact the typical activities you can expect to encounter at college. You may want to pay particular attention to the following contexts:

1. Classes (lectures, laboratory, physical activity, web based instruction);
2. Assignments (reading, writing, calculating, keyboarding, library work, group work, internet based homework);
3. Communication (speaking, listening, writing, using phones, using e-mail);
4. Evaluation (tests, papers, oral reports group presentations/projects);
5. Time Constraints (timed tests, college deadline, assignment due dates);
6. Attendance (class, required activities out of class, residential requirements);
7. Campus (mobility; orientation/navigation, transportation);
8. Residence Halls (room mates, food issues, climate control);
9. Co-Curricular (clubs, organizations, events, athletics,)

What have you tried in the past?

What accommodations, auxiliary aids, adaptive equipment, modifications and services have been provided in the past? Which ones work well? Which ones did not?

What do you anticipate needing at college?

General Guidelines for Documentation Providers

1. A diagnostic statement identifying the condition(s).

As appropriate, include ICD or DSM codes, the date of the most recent evaluation, or the dates of evaluation performed by referring professionals. If the most recent evaluation was not a full evaluation indicate when the last full evaluation conducted.

2. Current functional impact of the condition(s).

The current functional impact on physical (including mobility dexterity, and endurance), perceptual, cognitive (including attention, distractibility and communication), and behavioral abilities should be described as clinical narrative and/or through the provision of specific results from the diagnostic procedures. Descriptions should provide a sense of severity, information on variability over time or circumstance and potential environmental triggers.

3. Treatments, medications, assistive devices/services currently prescribed or in use.

A description of treatments, medications, assistive devices, accommodations and/or assistive services in current use and their estimated effectiveness in ameliorating the impact of the condition(s) is helpful. Include any significant side effects that may impact physical, perceptual, behavioral or cognitive performance.

4. The expected progression or stability of the impacts described over time.

This description should provide an estimate of the change in the functional impacts of the condition(s) over time and/or recommendations concerning the predictable needs for reevaluation of the condition(s). If the condition is variable (based on known cycles or environmental triggers) are they under self-care for flair-ups or episodes?

5. Recommended accommodations and services.

Recommendations should be logically connected to the impact of the condition. When connections are not obvious they should be explained. Recommendations will be deferred to whenever possible but will be evaluated in the context of the course or program.

Not all documentation will contain all of these elements, but the more information we have, the easier it is to determine which accommodations are appropriate and beneficial.

Also of interest: The U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights has issued a pamphlet "Students with Disabilities: Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities" The pamphlet is found at <http://www.ed.gov/ocr/transition.html>

Send documentation to:

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