Guidelines for Documenting a Physical or Medical Disability

Students seeking support services from Students with Disabilities Services (SDS) 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, 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, or bodily functions. Merely submitting evidence of a diagnosis is not sufficient to warrant academic accommodations. Specific accommodations require the documentation outlined below. A verification form is also available to provide guidance in the assessment process. Please do not hesitate to contact SDS at 813-974-4309 if you have any questions.

If documentation is not available or is older than 5 years, please contact SDS and request an in-person meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss possible eligibility for services including history of accommodations and documentation of options.

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 sensitivity, 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: Because conditions may change over time, current evaluations are critical in providing reasonable accommodations. In cases where a condition is permanent and unchanging (e.g. cerebral palsy, amputation, etc.), SDS 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.
   e. Severity of symptoms.
   f. Prognosis of disorder.

3. **Functional Limitations**
   
   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 limitations 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. Services for Students with Disabilities will make the determination regarding whether accommodations are reasonable in the University environment.

All documentation submitted to SDS is considered confidential.

Documentation should be sent to the following address:

University of South Florida
Students with Disabilities Services
4202 E. Fowler Ave., SVC 1133
Tampa, FL 33620-6923

Documentation may be faxed to 813.974.7337