

**University of South Florida
Students with Disabilities Services**

Guidelines for Documenting Psychological Disabilities

Students seeking support services from Students with Disabilities Services (SDS) on the basis of previously diagnosed psychological disabilities are requested to 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 should describe a disabling condition, which is defined by the presence of substantial limitations in one or more major life activity. The guidelines below are intended to provide guidance for the assessment process, including the areas that should be assessed in order for SDS staff to make appropriate decisions. Please do not hesitate to **contact SDS at (813) 974-4309 if you have any questions.**

In order to determine the presence or absence of other conditions that frequently co-occur with the disorder, which may be of relevance in the classroom, comprehensive psychoeducational or neuropsychological evaluations may be required to support specific accommodation requests.

Documentation in support of a psychological disability should include the following information:

1. **DSM-5 or ICD Diagnosis (text and code)**, given based on a formal assessment of current psychological and health status, and a formal diagnosis of a disabling condition provided by a licensed treatment provider (e.g., psychiatrist, licensed clinical psychologist, licensed social worker, etc.)
2. In order to establish a history of the condition and recency of evaluation:
 - a. **Date of diagnosis.**
 - b. **Date of last contact.** Accommodations are based on an assessment of the current nature and impact of your disability. Because psychological conditions may change over time, current evaluations can be critical for providing reasonable accommodations. Depending on the nature of the disability, updated evaluations may be requested.
3. **Comprehensive Evaluation**
 - a. **A diagnostic interview and other tools used to determine** relevant background in support of that diagnosis.
 - b. **The evaluation should include treatments** currently in use and provide a description of the expected progression of the disability over time (i.e., permanent/chronic vs. short-term/temporary). Information on medication side effects is useful and may be considered in accommodation decisions.
 - c. **Onset, history, and prognosis of diagnosis and symptoms.**
4. **Functional limitations**
 - a. Major life activities that are **functionally limited** by the individual's symptoms.
 - b. Behavioral manifestations of the diagnosis that **functionally limits** the individual in the academic setting. Information to consider includes the severity, pervasiveness, and frequency of symptoms.

It is important to recognize that accommodation needs can change over time and are not always identified during the initial diagnostic process.

SDS will make the final determination as to whether appropriate and reasonable accommodations are warranted and can be provided to the individual.

*The diagnostic report must include the **name and title, license number, and signature** of the evaluator. Evaluators should not be related to the individual being assessed. A verification form is available to assist in the documentation process.*

All documentation submitted to SDS is considered confidential.

Due to the broad nature of Florida's public records and email legislation, SDS encourages students to upload documentation with the secure on-line SDS application found via the "Access SDS" icon at www.sds.usf.edu.

Documentation may also be faxed to (813) 974-7337 or mailed to:

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