

DOCUMENTATION GUIDELINES: BEHAVIORAL OR MENTAL HEALTH

The Office of Disability Services (ODS) provides academic accommodations to students with diagnosed disabilities. The purpose of documentation is to assist ODS in determining a student's disability* information and their eligibility to receive accommodations. The information you provide will be kept within the student's file at ODS, where it will be held securely and confidentially.

Students requesting accommodations must provide documentation from a qualified healthcare professional. These professionals are generally trained, certified, or licensed to diagnose and treat conditions, including a psychologist, psychiatrist, counselor, or social worker.

School plans such as an IEP or 504 Accommodation Plan are often insufficient without accompanying information or testing results. Clinical chart notes or printed electronic records from a patient portal are also generally insufficient. Information or evaluations submitted should be from within the last five (5) years. A history of accommodations alone does not guarantee the provision of similar accommodations at UA. The final determination of appropriate and reasonable accommodations rests with ODS.

Please provide a typed and signed letter, on letterhead, addressing the following information. We invite you to attach any other documents or information you deem relevant in supporting the student's academic accommodations request.

1. Diagnosis

- (a) Date of diagnosis
- (b) Primary diagnosis as listed in the most recent version of the DSM or ICD

2. Evidence of impairment

- (a) Indicate how the diagnosis was determined. What diagnostic criteria were endorsed?

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- (b) Describe the symptoms the student is experiencing. How do these symptoms impact the student's academics?
- (c) Can symptoms be explained by an alternative or dual diagnosis?
- (d) Describe the nature, frequency, and severity of the symptoms (i.e., mild, moderate, or severe)

3. Medication / Treatment Plan

- (a) Address prescribed medications, dosages, schedules or side effects that may influence the type of accommodations provided. Medication alone cannot be used to support a diagnosis.
- (b) Address aspects of the student's treatment plan that should be considered when determining academic accommodations.

Please share your letter with the student so they can upload it with their ODS application (found on our website, www.ods.ua.edu).

*The legal definition of disability is a mental or physical condition that substantially limits a major life activity compared to most people. Substantial in this context means a notable, significant, meaningful limit / difference to the manner in which the individual engages in the activity, the conditions necessary for them to engage in the activity, the duration for which they can engage in the activity, or the frequency which they engage in the activity. Major life activities include, but are not limited to, caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating, and the proper functioning of major bodily systems.

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