



DISABILITY AND ACCESS

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

100 West Dean Keeton St. A4100 · Austin, TX 78712-1093

disability.utexas.edu · (512) 471-6259 · FAX (512) 475-7730 · VP (512) 410-6644

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## **Disability and Access**

### **Guidelines for Documenting Psychological Disabilities**

Students seeking support services from Disability and Access (D&A) on the basis of a previously diagnosed psychological disability must 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 must describe a disabling condition, which is defined by the presence of *substantial* limitations in one or more major life activities. Merely submitting evidence of a diagnosis is not sufficient to warrant academic accommodations. Similarly, nonspecific diagnoses, such as “adjustment problems,” “emotional difficulties,” “mood disturbance,” and/or “test difficulty/anxiety” in and of themselves do not constitute a disability. The guidelines below are intended to allow D&A to determine eligibility for services and appropriate accommodations. D&A staff are available at (512) 471-6259 for consultation. A verification form is also available to provide guidance in the assessment process. A comprehensive report of any testing conducted (including test scores, if relevant) should be included with the verification form.

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.) Licensed treatment provider should not be related to the individual being assessed.

*In order to establish a history of the condition and recency of evaluation.*

- a. **Date of diagnosis.**
- b. **Date of last contact.** *The assessment must be current.* Accommodations are based on an assessment of the current nature and impact of your disability. Because psychological conditions may change over time, current evaluations are critical for providing reasonable accommodations. In general, this means that evaluations must have been completed within the last **twelve (12) months prior to accommodation requests**. In addition, depending on the nature of the disability, evaluations may need to be updated on a semester-by-semester or yearly basis.

## 2. *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** (e.g., medication, therapy) 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.**

3. **Functional limitations:** *Should be determined WITHOUT consideration of mitigating measures (i.e. medication, etc.). If condition is episodic in nature, level of functioning should be assessed based on active phase of symptoms.*

- a. Major life activities that are **functionally limited** by the individual's symptoms.
- b/c. 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.
- d. Any special considerations that should be made (i.e. side effects of medication, etc.)

4. **Accommodations:** A description of accommodations and services used in the past and recommended accommodations for the future. It is important to note that Disability and Access makes the determination regarding what accommodations are appropriate in the University environment.

*The diagnostic report, must include the **name and title, and license number** of the evaluator. A verification form is available to assist in the documentation process.*

**All documentation submitted to D&A is considered confidential.**

Documentation should be sent to the following address:

The University of Texas at Austin  
Division of Student Affairs  
Disability and Access  
100 W. Dean Keeton St. Stop A4100  
Austin, Texas 78712-1093  
Email: access@austin.utexas.edu  
Fax: (512) 475-7730