

ADD/ADHD – Documentation Guidelines

Documentation submitted to the Center for Disability Services must indicate that a specific disability exists and that the identified disability substantially limits one or more major life activity (e.g. walking, seeing, speaking, hearing, breathing, learning, etc.). A diagnosis of a condition does not automatically qualify a student for accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). **The documentation must demonstrate that the condition rises to the level of a disability.**

The components of the documentation should include the following:

- **Format** – typed/printed on letterhead, dated, and signed with name, title, and professional credentials.
- **Qualifications** – The evaluation should be completed by a professional who has comprehensive training in differential diagnosis and direct experience working with adolescents and adults with ADHD. This may include: clinical, school, or counseling psychologists (Ph.D.), neuropsychologists, psychiatrists, and other relevantly trained professionals.
- **ADHD diagnosis** – The evaluation should establish that a clear diagnosis of ADHD is present according to the criteria identified in the DSM-5. The student must exhibit a sufficient number of symptoms (listed in the DSM-5) of Inattention and/or Hyperactivity/Impulsivity that are persistent and interferes with functioning. The exact symptoms should be specified and described in detail.

Since ADHD is a condition that first manifests itself as a child or early adolescent, the documentation must provide evidence to support a childhood (or early adolescent) onset of symptoms and associated impairment. Historical information regarding student's academic history and learning processes in elementary, secondary, and postsecondary schooling should be investigated and could also include details of the impact and limitations in employment and family history.

- **Evaluation Measures** – Diagnostic assessment must consist of more than a self-report. While checklists and/or surveys can serve to supplement the diagnostic profile, in and of themselves are not adequate for the diagnosis of ADHD. Additional assessment should include standardized measures for inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity as delineated in the DSM-5. A combination of assessment measures is required. Examples include, but are not limited to: rating scales (self and relevant third party), continuous performance tests (e.g., TOVA, IVA), neuropsychological testing (e.g., WAIS-IV, WJ IV), and psychoeducational testing (e.g., WIAT-III, WJ IV). Assessments must be reliable, valid and age appropriate. A list of all tests and measures, including all sub tests

and standard scores and percentiles, should be provided.

- **Informal observations** during test administration should be noted.
- **Limitations** – a statement regarding the functional limitations of the condition on learning, the academic environment, academic performance, and major life activities.
- Include a “**rule-out**” statement. The evaluator must also investigate and rule out the possibility of other potential diagnoses resembling ADD/ADHD, such as neuroendocrine disorders (thyroid dysfunction), neurologic disorders, and/or medical conditions or substance abuse.
- **Current Impact** – provide a clear statement of current severity and impact of the condition on one or more major life activity.
- **Report Summary**
 - **Recap** the high points, rule out alternative explanations, and summarize how the findings support any “substantial limitation” to a major life activity.
 - Identify the diagnosed disability. If the data does not indicate a diagnosable disability, state conclusion in report.
 - Provide **specific diagnosis as defined by the most recent edition of the DSM, including diagnostic code.**
- **Recommendations**
 - **Accommodations** - a summary of recommended accommodations tied to specific test results and including rationale for the accommodations.
 - If there is no previous **history of accommodations**, evaluator should include an explanation of why accommodations were not used in the past and why accommodations are needed at this time. (*Note: A history of accommodations without demonstrating current need does not necessarily warrant accommodations.*)
 - Recommendations are considered, however, the Center for Disability Services will make final determination regarding accommodations.
- **Documentation must be recent.** Although the diagnosis of ADD/ADHD may be life long, the severity of the condition may change over time. If the comprehensive evaluation documenting the condition is more than **five years** old, the student may be asked to submit an update from a qualified professional that provides the diagnosis, recent test results, a description of the student’s current level of functioning, and a rationale for the requested accommodations.
- It is noted that individuals may benefit from prescribed medications. A positive response to medication does not necessarily confirm a diagnosis nor does the use of medication either support or negate the need for accommodations.

- A school plan such as an individualized education program (**IEP**) or a **504 plan** is **insufficient documentation** by itself but can be included as part of a more comprehensive assessment. The assessment should include the measures, tests, and details noted in the section above entitled “Evaluation Measures.”
- Historical information regarding the student’s academic history and learning processes in elementary, secondary, and postsecondary school, as well as transcripts, standardized test scores, and reports of classroom performance are helpful in determining appropriate accommodations, but are insufficient to determine eligibility.
- **ADD/ADHD diagnoses documented by family members will not be accepted** due to professional and ethical considerations even when the family members are otherwise qualified by training and licensure/certification.
- If the disability co-exists with another condition, please refer to the appropriate documentation guidelines for additional information.
- The student’s advisor and the Center for Disability Services case management team will determine if the student qualifies for accommodations and what accommodations should be implemented.