

Deaf/ Hard of Hearing – 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. **The documentation for a deaf/hard of hearing must demonstrate that the condition rises to the level of a disability.**

The documentation should include the following specific components:

- **Format** – typed/ printed on official letterhead, dated, and signed from a licensed and qualified professional (e.g. Audiologist, Speech Therapist, Otorhinolaryngologist, Otologist, and other relevantly trained healthcare professionals qualified to make such diagnoses).
- **Diagnosis** – a clear statement of deafness or hearing loss, **with audiogram**.
- **History and Prognosis** – a summary of the history and prognosis of the condition.
- **Treatment** – relevant information regarding the current treatment of the condition.
- **Current Impact** – a statement regarding the current impact the deafness or hearing loss on the student's functioning.
- **Limitations** – a statement of the functional limitations of the hearing loss on learning and other major life activities.
- **Auxiliary Aids** – a statement regarding the use of hearing aids or auxiliary devices.
- **Assessment Procedures** – a summary of assessment procedures and evaluation instruments used to make the diagnosis, including a list of tests used in the evaluation and relevant subtest scores.
- **Accommodations** – a summary of recommended and suggested accommodations. (Requested accommodations must be tied to the functional limitations of the individual relevant to the academic setting. A history of accommodations without demonstrating current need does not necessarily warrant accommodations. If there is no history of accommodations the documentation must include a detailed explanation of why accommodations were not needed in the past and why they are now requested. The documentation must also support each request for accommodation, academic adjustment or modification, and/or auxiliary aid.)

Please also note the following statements regarding documentation:

- **Documentation must be recent.** The age of acceptable documentation is dependent upon the condition, current status of the student, and the student's request for accommodations. Although deaf/hard of hearing is considered to be a permanent diagnosis, it is essential that a student provide recent and appropriate documentation. Since reasonable accommodations are based upon the current impact of the disability, the documentation must address the individual's current level of functioning and the need for accommodations. If the documentation is more than **three years** old, the student must submit a letter from a qualified professional that provides an update of the diagnosis, a description of the student's current level of functioning and a rationale for each of the requested accommodations. In some cases an updated letter from a qualified professional may be required to verify that functional limitations and accommodations to mediate the affects continue to be relevant in their entirety.
- Psycho-Educational or Neuropsychological Assessments are often necessary to support the need for accommodations when Deaf/Hard of Hearing is presented in combination with other conditions that interfere with cognitive performance.
- Documentation may be provided from more than one source when a clinical team approach employing a variety of professionals has been used.
- **Diagnoses of deaf/hard of hearing 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.