

DOCUMENTATION GUIDELINES FOR PSYCHIATRIC/PSYCHOLOGICAL DISABILITIES **

Policy

Federal law (Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990) established the rights of individuals with disabilities. Syracuse University is committed to compliance with all applicable federal laws and regulations regarding reasonable accommodation needed to provide equal opportunity to qualified individuals with disabilities. Final determination as to the appropriateness of an accommodation to the University setting is evaluated on a case by case basis. In accordance with federal and state regulations disability related information will be treated in a confidential manner.

Procedure

A student is responsible for providing documentation that supports his/her request for accommodation. It is important that the documentation clearly establish that the student has a disability as defined by federal regulations and that the documentation clearly supports the individual's request for accommodation. The following documentation guidelines are provided in the interest of ensuring that documentation of a disability demonstrates a significant impact on major life activity and supports the individual's request for accommodation.

Documentation Guidelines

1. A qualified professional must conduct the evaluation

An evaluation must be conducted by a qualified professional. Professionals conducting assessments and rendering diagnoses should have appropriate training in diagnosing psychological/psychiatric disorders. The name, title, and professional credentials of the evaluator, including information about license or certification should be clearly stated in the documentation. All reports should be on letterhead, typed, dated, signed, and otherwise legible.

2. Documentation should be current

The provision of accommodations is based upon assessment of the current impact of the student's disabilities on his or her academic performance. Documentation that is outdated or inadequate in scope or content; does not address the student's current level of functioning; or does not address changes in the student's performance since the previous assessment was conducted may not support requested accommodations. When appropriate additional supportive documentation will be requested.

3. Documentation necessary to substantiate a disability should be comprehensive

- a. A statement, on *letterhead*, by a qualified health professional.
- b. A summary of assessment procedures, evaluation instruments used to make the diagnosis, and a summary of evaluation results;
- c. The statement should include a specific diagnosis, the *nature of the disability, functional limitations, current status* of the student, and any *recommendations* for support. These recommendations should be supported by the evaluation;
- d. When warranted, medical information relating to the student should also include the impact of medication on the student's ability to meet the demands in the post-secondary environment.

** *These guidelines are not meant to be used exclusively or as a replacement for direct communication with the Office of Disability Services regarding the individual nature of a disability. While submitted documentation meeting the above guidelines may be acceptable to Syracuse University it is important to be mindful that they may/may not meet the documentation guidelines required in other academic or testing organizations (e.g., special certifications, Board examinations, standardized tests for admission to graduate schools, law schools, etc.).*