



Birmingham-Southern College
Office of Accessibility

Documentation Requirements for Academic and Residential Accommodations

The Office of Accessibility provides academic and residential services and accommodations for students with diagnosed disabilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines a disability as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. In order to receive academic or residential accommodations, a student must submit comprehensive documentation describing the current functional limitations that impact the student in an academic or residential setting. Documentation is the basis for decision-making regarding the student's needs for accommodations in a rigorous academic environment.

Documentation that is relevant, useful, and thorough is considered of high quality. The outline below is designed to assist the student as they work with the treating and diagnosing healthcare professional(s) to obtain the specific information necessary to evaluate eligibility for specific accommodations at Birmingham-Southern College.

GUIDELINES FOR DOCUMENTATION SUBMISSION

1. Documentation is provided by a licensed or otherwise properly credentialed professional who has appropriate and comprehensive training, relevant experience, and no personal relationship with the individual being evaluated. An appropriate match between the credentials of the professional making the diagnosis and the condition being reported is expected. For example, an orthopedic limitation might be documented by a physician, but not a licensed psychologist.
2. Documentation should be relatively recent in order to provide an accurate description of current functioning. It is suggested the evaluation has been completed within three years of submission to the Office of Accessibility. The potential for progression or evolution of certain disabilities makes updated evaluations, including accurate and timely recommendations for accommodations mandatory, for the best provision of full access to the life activity that is impaired. Because some conditions are permanent or non-varying, guidelines on updated evaluations will differ from case to case and be reviewed as such.
3. Documentation includes a clear diagnostic statement. The diagnosis should establish that a disability is present, the date of the most current evaluation, and the date of the original diagnosis. The most recent editions of the Diagnostic Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association and the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems of the World Health Organization are recommended as the diagnostic guides for the evaluation.
4. Documentation outlines the methodology of the diagnosis and assessment, including the diagnostic tests or methods utilized and the results of those procedures. Methodology should be consistent with current professional methods used by those with expertise in working with the disability.
5. Documentation should address the functional impact of the disability, whether it is physical, mental, emotional, or behavioral; the disability must substantially limit a major life activity. This functional impact should be detailed explicitly or be evident from the results of the diagnostic methodology.
6. Documentation should include recommendations for accommodations that help provide full access to the life activity impaired. A clear connection between the accommodation and this access should be shown by the evaluation and documentation. Such recommendations can include compensatory strategies or assistive services. Common academic accommodations recommended by professionals include, but are not limited to extended time for testing; extensions on lengthy assignments; peer note taking or lecture notes provided; use of laptop in class for note taking and/or exams; audiotapes of textbooks; audio recording of lectures; flexibility in absences allowed beyond the stated policy; or priority seating.

To ensure a comprehensive assessment, the Office of Accessibility encourages students to share this document with the healthcare professional prior to testing. Failure to provide high quality documentation could delay the accommodation process. Submitted documentation may be released to the student at his or her request.

Documentation should be submitted via mail or fax to:

Office of Accessibility
900 Arkadelphia Road
Box 549010
Birmingham, Alabama 35254
Phone: (205) 226-7909
Fax: (205) 226-7030