

## **Documentation Requirements for Pervasive Developmental Disorder ( Autism Spectrum Disorders)**

Savannah State University's Office of Disability Services is committed to working with students with disabilities to assess their needs and to assist with academic accommodations that may be necessary and appropriate due to their disability.

Services are available to students who:

1. Self-identify to the Coordinator of Disability Services.
2. Participate in an intake interview with the Coordinator of Disability Services to determine needs and accommodations.
3. Provide appropriate documentation of the disability (see below) that supports the accommodations being requested.

Accommodations are determined on an individual basis, based on the documentation provided and the interview with the student. Accommodations that are considered reasonable and do not fundamentally alter the nature of the program or course may be appropriate.

The SSU Coordinator of Disability Services works closely with the Regents' Center for Learning Disorders at Georgia Southern University in Statesboro to review documentation and assess eligibility for accommodations. All documentation of Pervasive Developmental Disorder must be reviewed and approved by the Regents' Center for Learning Disorders before accommodations are provided. The RCLD Liaison, Dr. Beverly Sermons, can be contacted at (912) 478 0100 if professionals have questions regarding documentation requirements and appropriate tools for evaluation prior to beginning an assessment of a student. If your evaluation is not within the last 3 years, you will need to update your evaluation with current information. You can have a private psychologist /psychiatrist/physician perform your evaluation, or have an evaluation done by the Regents' Center for Learning Disorders for \$500 or you can request evaluation from the GA Dept of Labor's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services. If you have questions or are interested in scheduling your assessment at the RCLD or being referred to Vocational Rehabilitation, please contact Amelia Castilian-Moore, the Coordinator of Disability Services for referral at (912) 3583115 or by email at [moorea@savannahstate.edu](mailto:moorea@savannahstate.edu) or see our web page at <http://www.savannahstate.edu/adm/sa/cds.htm>

### **Definition of Disability**

An individual must demonstrate that his/her condition meets the definition of a disability under the *Rehabilitation Act, 1973* and/or the *Americans with Disability Act (ADA), 1990*. The ADA defines a disability as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

*Substantially limits* under ADA refer to significant restrictions as to the *condition, manner or duration* under which an individual can perform a particular major life activity as compared to most people.

*Whether a condition is substantially limiting* to support an accommodation request is a decision made by qualified professional(s) based upon multiple sources of information.

A clinical diagnosis is not synonymous with a disability. The specific symptoms that are present should be stated in the documentation. Evidence that these symptoms are associated with substantial impairment in a major life activity is required for provision of accommodations. A

detailed description of current substantial limitation in the academic environment is essential to identify appropriate academic accommodations, auxiliary aids, and services.

Specific requests for accommodations need to be linked to the student's current functional limitations, and the rationale for each recommendation clearly stated.

### **General Documentation Guidelines**

Secondary education eligibility reports, Individualized Educational Plans, Summary of Progress reports, or previous provision of special education services may not be sufficient documentation for college-level accommodations.

Documentation should provide a diagnostic statement identifying the disability, describe the diagnostic criteria and methodology used to diagnose the condition, and detail the progression of the condition if its impact on the student's functioning is expected to change over time.

Documentation should provide an adequate representation of the student's current functional abilities. In most situations, documentation should be within three years of the student's application for services. Professional judgment, however, must be used in accepting older documentation of conditions that are permanent or non-varying, or in requiring more recent documentation for conditions for which the functional impact may change over time.

Documentation must include the names, signatures, titles, and license numbers of the appropriate evaluators, as well as the dates of testing and contact information. Evaluators must be licensed professionals whose training and licensure status is consistent with expertise in the disability for which they provide documentation.

### **Pervasive Developmental Disorders Documentation**

Pervasive developmental disorders are characterized by severe and pervasive impairment in several areas of development including reciprocal social interaction skills, communication skills, or the presence of stereotyped behavior, interests, and activities. Several different disorders fall within this category including **Asperger's Disorder and Autistic Disorder**.

**Asperger's Disorder** is a pervasive developmental disorder characterized by qualitative impairment in social interactions and the presence of repetitive and stereotyped behaviors, interests, and activities.

**Autistic Disorder** is a pervasive developmental disorder characterized by qualitative impairment in social interactions, qualitative impairment in communication affecting both verbal and nonverbal communication skills, and the presence of repetitive and stereotyped behaviors, interests, and activities.

Information needed:

\*Diagnosis and corresponding code from the most recent DSM must be included.

\* Assessment of the following diagnostic criteria is required and evaluation results must be included in the documentation:

\_Developmental history that includes evidence of Asperger's Disorder or Autistic \_Disorder symptoms in childhood and documents the absence of clinically- significant general delay in early cognitive or language development.

\_Documentation of current qualitative impairment in social interaction and communication.

\_Documentation of current restricted, repetitive, and stereotyped patterns of behavior, interests, and activities.

\_Assessment of broad cognitive ability and language function using standardized assessment measures with age-appropriate norms.

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