

Documentation Requirements for Systemic Medical Disabilities

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.

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.

Systemic Medical Disabilities Documentation

Systemic disabilities are conditions affecting one or more of the body's systems, including the respiratory, immunological, neurological, circulatory, or digestive systems. Systemic disabilities are often unstable therefore, the need for and type of reasonable accommodations may change over time. Information needed includes:

- *Description of the history, current symptoms, and severity of the disorder.
- *Description of the expected progression or stability of the disorder.
- *Description of the current functional limitations impacting academic performance resulting from the disorder.

Please note that the Office of Disability Services does not have the authority to override professors' or academic departments' policies regarding attendance and make up work.

For additional information, contact Amelia Castilian-Moore, Coordinator of Disability Services, at (912) 358 3115 or email her at moorea@savannahstate.edu or see our web page at <http://www.savannahstate.edu/adm/sa/cds.htm>. Fax 912 351 6868