



UNIVERSITY OF DALLAS

Student Disability Services ♦ Academic Success Office ♦ Braniff 114
1845 East Northgate Drive ♦ Irving, Texas 75062 ♦ www.udallas.edu/academic-success
Phone (972) 721-5056 ♦ Facsimile (972) 265-5712 ♦ Email ada@udallas.edu

Guidelines for Documenting Autism Spectrum Disorder

Students seeking support services from Student Disability Services (SDS) on the basis of a previously diagnosed Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) must submit documentation that verifies their eligibility under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act. The documentation must describe a disabling condition, which is defined by the presence of substantial limitations in one or more major life activities. Merely submitting evidence of a diagnosis is not sufficient to warrant academic accommodations. Similarly, nonspecific diagnoses, such as “adjustment problems,” “emotional difficulties,” “poor communication,” and/or “test difficulty/anxiety” in and of themselves do not constitute a disability. The guidelines below are intended to allow SDS to determine eligibility for services and appropriate accommodations. SDS staff are available at (972) 721-5056 for consultation. A verification form is also available to provide guidance in the assessment process. A comprehensive report of any testing conducted (including test scores, if relevant) should be included with the verification form. Documentation should include:

1. **DSM-5 or ICD Diagnosis (text and code)**, given based on a formal assessment of current psychological and health status, and a formal diagnosis of a disabling condition provided by a licensed treatment provider (e.g., psychiatrist, licensed clinical psychologist, licensed social worker, etc.) Licensed treatment provider should not be related to the individual being assessed. In order to establish a history of the condition and recency of evaluation, documentation should include:
 - a. Date of diagnosis.
 - b. Date of last clinical contact: *The assessment must be current.* Because conditions may change over time current evaluations are critical in providing reasonable accommodations. In general, this means that evaluations must have been completed within the three years prior to the accommodations request. In addition, depending on the nature of the disability, evaluations may need to be updated on a semester-by-semester or yearly basis.
2. **Evaluation**
 - a. **A diagnostic interview and other tools used** to determine relevant background in support of that diagnosis.
 - b. **The evaluation should include treatments** (e.g., medication, therapy) currently in use and provide a description of the expected progression of the disability over time (i.e., permanent/chronic vs. short-term/temporary). Information on medication side effects is useful and may be considered in accommodation decisions.
 - c. **Onset, history, and prognosis of diagnosis and symptoms.**

3. **Functional Limitations:** Should be determined WITHOUT consideration of mitigating measures (i.e. medication, etc.). If condition is episodic in nature, level of functioning should be assessed based on active phase of symptoms.
 - a. **Major life activities that are functionally limited** by the individual's symptoms.
 - b. Behavioral manifestations of the diagnosis that **functionally limits** the individual in the academic setting. Information to consider includes the severity pervasiveness, and frequency of symptoms.
 - c. **Any special considerations** that should be made (i.e. side effects of medication, etc.)
4. **Accommodations:** A description of accommodations and services used in the past and recommended accommodations for the future. It is important to note that Student Disability Services makes the determination regarding what accommodations are appropriate in the University environment.

The diagnostic report must include the name, title, and license number of the evaluator. A verification form is available to assist in the documentation process.

All documentation submitted to SDS is considered confidential.

Documentation should be sent to the following address:

University of Dallas
Student Disability Services, Academic Success Office
1845 East Northgate Drive
Irving, Texas 75062

Documentation may be faxed to (972) 265-5712 or delivered to Braniff 114.

[Adapted from <http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/autism-spectrum-disorder-documentation-guidelines/>, with permission from ITS, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712-1110.]