

DOCUMENTATION GUIDELINES: ASPERGER'S SYNDROME

Students who are requesting services from Disability Support Services at National University of Health Sciences are required to submit documentation under the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments (ADAAA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Individuals with disabilities are protected from discrimination and may be entitled to reasonable accommodations and the right to equal access to programs and services. A diagnosis of a disability alone does not automatically qualify an individual for accommodations under the ADAAA. To establish the need for a reasonable accommodation, the documentation must indicate the disability substantially limits one or more major life activities, and supports the request for services, accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids.

This document provides guidelines necessary to establish the impact of the disability on the individual's educational performance and participation in other University programs and activities, and to validate the need for accommodations.

Submitted information must be current and comprehensive in order to avoid unnecessary delays in granting the accommodations. Students may be asked to provide updated comprehensive information if their condition is potentially changeable and/or previous documentation doesn't include sufficient relevant information. All documentation must conclude with a section devoted to recommendations linked to the disability that are appropriate to the educational program.

1. A qualified professional must conduct the evaluation

Professionals conducting assessments and rendering diagnoses of Asperger's or other Pervasive Developmental Disorder and making recommendations for appropriate accommodations must be qualified to do so. Comprehensive training and relevant experience with an adolescent and adult population are essential. The evaluation must be performed by a professional who has comprehensive training in the field of Asperger's and other Pervasive Developmental Disorders and direct experience working with an adult population such as: Neuropsychologist, Psychiatrist, Clinical Psychologist, or Neurodevelopmental Physician.

2. The evaluation must be current

The determination of whether an individual is significantly limited in functioning is based on assessment of the current impact of the impairment. However, since developmental disorders such as Asperger's and Other Developmental Disorders often originate in childhood, information demonstrating a history of impaired functioning beginning in childhood should also be provided. Disability Support Services reserves the right to request updated or augmented documentation in order to have a more accurate picture of the current level of functioning.

3. The documentation must be comprehensive

Because Asperger's disorders are often manifested during childhood (though not always diagnosed), historical information regarding the individual's communication, social and academic history in elementary, secondary, and post secondary education should be documented and provided. Self/parent-report alone, without any accompanying historical documents that validate communication/social/academic problems, are generally not sufficient to establish a disability. A disability and/or a DSM must be stated within the documentation submitted.

In addition, the documentation should include:

- a. Any specific objective measures used to help substantiate the diagnosis.
- b. A detailed description of the student's current functioning including:
 - communication/language skills
 - ability to interact socially
 - restricted, repetitive and/or stereotyped patterns of behavior, activities and sensory functioning
 - sensitivity to environmental conditions
 - motor planning
- c. Evidence to support these statements should include results of aptitude and achievement testing, standardized tests of language skills and standardized scales of symptoms related to autism; as well as clinical observations including level of severity.
- d. The student's current limitations, resulting from Asperger's Disorder including communication skills, social/emotional functioning and functioning in the living and academic environment in the post-secondary setting.
- e. For students who wish to receive consideration for academic accommodations, the evaluator must provide relevant academic performance data including results of aptitude and achievement standardized tests.
- f. Relevant information regarding current treatment and prognosis.
- g. Relevant medical information relating to the student's Asperger's Disorder including a description of the impact any prescribed medications or medication side effects have on the student's ability to meet the demands of the postsecondary environment

4. Diagnostic Interview

An evaluation report should include the summary of a comprehensive diagnostic interview by a qualified evaluator. It should include a summary and description of the presenting problem(s); developmental history; relevant medical history, including the absence of a medical basis for the present symptoms; academic history; relevant family history; relevant psychosocial history; a discussion of dual diagnosis, alternative or co-existing mood, behavioral, neurological, and/or personality disorders along with any history of relevant medication use that may affect the individual's ability within a higher education setting.

The evaluator must investigate and rule out the possibility of other potential diagnoses involving developmental and neurological conditions, as well as educational factors that may result in symptoms mimicking the purported Asperger's Disorder and Other Pervasive Developmental Disorders.

5. Informal Assessment

Social-emotional assessment is helpful in order to rule-out primary emotional difficulties. Social-emotional status should be assessed and discussed. If applicable, a mental health diagnosis should be clearly stated. Colleges need to know differential diagnosis of psychological disorders that impact upon academics. College is typically quite stressful for some students who have disabilities. In an attempt to better serve students, it is helpful to know about their personality characteristics, psychological welfare, self-esteem and ability to respond to stress. Significant specific deficits relative to potential should also be documented.

6. All documentation must include the following:

- a. A clear statement of the disorder, including DSM-IV diagnosis and a summary of present symptoms.
- b. Specific dates that are relevant to treatment history. Documentation for eligibility should be current; the most recent visit cannot be more than one year from the date of registration with the Office of Disability Support Services.
- c. A summary of any assessment procedures and/or evaluation instruments used to make the diagnosis and a summary of the evaluation results, including standardized or percentile scores.
- d. Medical information relating to the student's needs to include the impact of medication on the student's ability to meet the demands of the postsecondary environment.
- e. A statement of the functional impact or limitations of the disorder on learning or other major life activity and the degree to which it impacts the individual in the learning context for which accommodations are being requested.
- f. **Recommendations for reasonable accommodations the university may provide.**

Please note that in reviewing the specific accommodation requested by the student or recommended by the physician/evaluator, Disability Support Services may find that while a recommendation is clinically supported, it is not the most appropriate accommodation given the requirements of a particular student's academic program. In addition, Disability Support Services may also propose clinically supported accommodations that would be appropriate and useful for the student, but which neither the student nor the evaluator have requested.

The aforementioned guidelines are provided so that Disability Support Services can respond appropriately to the individual needs of the student. Disability Support Services reserves the right to determine eligibility for services based on the quality of the submitted documentation. Documentation may need to be updated or supplemented in order to be considered complete. **Students who submit partial or incomplete documentation that does not meet the guidelines will not be eligible for services or granted accommodations.**

Send all documentation to:

Disability Support Services
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