Wittenberg University

Documentation Guidelines for Disability

Purpose of Documentation

These documentation guidelines have been provided to assist students in obtaining appropriate documentation from qualified professionals. Appropriate documentation of a disability is only one part of determining necessary accommodations. The provision of appropriate documentation to Wittenberg University helps students educate appropriate staff about the impact of their disabilities, needs, and potential accommodations. Wittenberg requests documentation for the following reasons:

- To verify the existence of a disability.
- To assist in the collaborative determination of eligibility for auxiliary aids and services, and individual needs to minimize the impact of the disability.
- To personalize the student’s right to equal access to the institution.

General Statement

Wittenberg University is committed to responding to the needs of students with disabilities as outlined both in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (PL 93-616) and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (PL 101-336). The Assistant Provost in Academic Services is responsible for working with students to determine appropriate accommodations and with the students’ instructors to facilitate implementations of these accommodations. Students who need accommodations are responsible for requesting these services from Wittenberg University and meeting with the Assistant Provost in Academic Services for the following reasons:

- To provide documentation that supports the request for services.
- To discuss the request, the nature of their disabilities, and past experiences.

In working with the student, the Assistant Provost in Academic Services must have appropriate documentation of the disability. The documentation presented must verify that the student has “a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such individual; a record of such an impairment; or a record of being regarded as having such an impairment” (PL 101-336).

However, this documentation may not be sufficient to provide the Assistant Provost in Academic Services with the necessary information about current functional limitations to recommend accommodations. Documentation must validate the need for services based on the individual’s current level of functioning in the educational setting. A school plan such as an individualized education program (IEP) or a 504 plan, alone, is insufficient documentation, but it may be included as part of a more comprehensive assessment battery. A comprehensive assessment battery and the resulting diagnostic report must
include a diagnostic interview, assessment of aptitude, academic achievement, information processing and a diagnosis.

Documentation legitimizes a student’s request for accommodation and, in general, includes the following:

- **Identification of the nature and extent of the disability.**
  A clear statement of the disability, including the DSM-IV-TR diagnosis and a summary of present symptoms. Additionally, a summary of assessment procedures and evaluation instruments used to make the diagnosis and a summary of evaluation results, including standardized or percentile scores.

- **Specific information on the functional limitation as related to the academic environment.**

- **Description of the current course of treatment including medical side effects.**
  Medication information relating to the student’s needs should include the impact of medication on the student’s ability to meet the demands of the postsecondary environment.

- **Prognosis for the disability.**
  This description should provide an estimate of the change in the functional limitations of the disability over time and/or recommendations concerning the predictable needs for reevaluation.

- **Recommended reasonable accommodations.**
  Suggestions for reasonable accommodations that might be appropriate at the postsecondary level are encouraged. These recommendations should be supported by the diagnosis.

**Current Documentation**

The provision of all reasonable accommodations and services is based upon assessment of the impact of the student’s disabilities on his/her academic performance at a given time in the student’s life. Therefore, it is in the student’s best interest to provide recent and appropriate documentation relevant to the student’s learning environment.

In some instances, documentation may be outdated or inadequate in scope or content. It may not address the student’s current level of functioning or need for accommodations because observed changes may have occurred in the student’s performance since the previous assessment was conducted. In such cases, it may be appropriate to update the evaluation report. Since the purpose of the update is to determine the student’s current need for accommodations, the update, conducted by a qualified professional, should include a rationale for ongoing services and accommodations.
If accommodations are not clearly identified in a diagnostic report, the Assistant Provost in Academic Services should seek clarification and, if necessary, more information. The final determination for providing appropriate and reasonable accommodations rests with the institution.

**Qualifications of Evaluator**

Documentation for eligibility should be current, preferably within the last 3 years. Professionals conducting assessments, rendering diagnoses of a disability, and making recommendations for appropriate accommodations must be qualified to do so.

The name, title and professional credentials of the evaluator, including information about licensure or certification (e.g., licensed psychologist) as well as the area of specialization, employment and state/province in which the individual practices should be clearly stated in the documentation. For example, the following professionals would generally be considered qualified to evaluate specific learning disabilities provided that they have additional training and experience in the assessment of learning problems in adolescents and adults: clinical or educational psychologists, school psychologists, neuropsychologists, or learning disabilities specialists. Use of diagnostic terminology indicating the disability by someone whose training and experience are not in these fields is not acceptable. It is not considered appropriate for professionals to evaluate members of their families. All reports should be on letterhead, typed, dated, signed and otherwise legible.

Students who would like to be considered for disability accommodations must send documentation as outlined above to:

Wittenberg University  
Academic Services  
Ward St at North Wittenberg Ave  
PO Box 720  
Springfield, OH 45501-0720  

Or **fax** to the attention of  
Academic Services  
937-327-7522