



HARVARD LAW SCHOOL

Documentation Guidelines for Mental Health Conditions

I. A Qualified Professional Must Conduct the Evaluation

Professionals conducting assessments, rendering diagnoses of mental health disabilities, and making recommendations for accommodations must be qualified to do so. The name, title, and professional credentials of the qualified professional writing the report should be included. Information about licensure/certification, as well as the area of specialization, employment, and state or province in which the individual practices should be clearly stated in the documentation. Documentation from family members will not be accepted due to professional and ethical considerations.

II. Documentation Must Be Current

Due to the changing nature of mental health disabilities, it is essential that a student provide recent and appropriate documentation from a qualified professional. At a minimum, documentation should be six months current.

III. Documentation Necessary to Substantiate the Diagnosis Must Be Comprehensive

In most cases, documentation should be based on a comprehensive diagnostic/clinical evaluation meeting the guidelines outlined in this document. The following information should be included:

- A. Historic information and diagnostic interview, and/or psychiatric assessment
- B. A specific diagnosis: The report must include a specific diagnosis based on the DSM-IV-TR, or ICD-10 diagnostic criteria. The evaluator should use direct language in the diagnosis of a mental health disorder, avoiding the use of such nonspecific terms as "suggests" or "has problems with"
- C. A description of current functional limitations in the academic environment as well as across other settings
- D. Relevant information regarding medications and their anticipated impact on the student in an academic setting
- E. Relevant information regarding current treatment
- F. Alternative diagnoses or explanations should be ruled out. The evaluator must investigate, discuss, and rule out the possibility of other potential diagnoses involving neurological and/or medical conditions which may contribute to the student's performance.
- G. The diagnostic report must include specific recommendations for accommodation(s) as well as an explanation of why each accommodation is recommended.

Documentation Guidelines for Mental Health Conditions

The following guidelines for medical disabilities (including mobility, hearing and visual) and conditions resulting from temporary illnesses and injuries are provided to assist students who plan to submit clinical documentation to Accessibility Services at Harvard Law School.

- I. Professionals conducting assessments, rendering diagnoses, and making recommendations for accommodations must be qualified to do so. The name, title, and professional credentials of the qualified professional writing the report should be included. Information about licensure/certification, as well as the area of specialization, employment, and state or province in which the individual practices should be clearly stated in the documentation. Documentation from family members will not be accepted due to professional and ethical considerations.
- II. The documentation clearly indicates a disability as defined under the ADAAA (Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act)
- III. Current clinical documentation clearly supports the disability with relevant medical and other history
- IV. The evaluation contains a description of current medications, treatments and assistive devices and technologies; and history of medication side effects known to have affected the student
- V. There is a description of the functional limitations resulting from the disability which specifically addresses a postsecondary residential setting; and reference to allowable activities is included
- VI. The current clinical documentation clearly supports the direct link to and need for the requested accommodations