

Guidelines for Documentation

Cottey College's Guidelines for Documentation provides very important information to students, families, and medical physicians. It is strongly encouraged that all students seeking disability services read this document and present it to their medical physician in order to be accurately assessed for disability service eligibility. Students with disabilities are responsible for providing documentation of a disability to the coordinator of disability services, and all documentation must adhere to the guidelines below.

The federal definition of "disability," which Cottey College uses to determine whether a person is eligible for disability services, is three-fold:

1. a physical or mental impairment that limits one or more major life activities of such individual;
2. a record of such impairment; or
3. is regarded as having such an impairment.

Disability documentation is evidence that an individual meets the aforementioned definition of a disability. Each determination is made on an individual basis to meet the needs of the student and to ensure the College's academic standards are upheld without encountering undue financial burden. In order to determine disability services and reasonable accommodations, the coordinator of disability services requires documentation that meets the following criteria:

1. Provide a clear DSM-V or ICD diagnostic statement, which verifies the impairment currently exists. This statement must also include the severity, duration, and frequency of the impairment, detailed information about the diagnosis, and information ruling out other possible diagnoses or a justification for the diagnosis given.
2. Conducted by a qualified licensed professional who is familiar with the history and functional implications of the disability. Documentation must include the name, title, professional credentials, license/certification information, area of specialization, employment agency, and state in which the professional works. Additionally, the practitioner must be impartial and cannot be a member of the student's family. Below is a list of qualified practitioners for specific disabilities:

Neurological Disabilities – neurologists; neuropsychologists; licensed, clinical, rehabilitation and school psychologists; psychiatrists; relevantly trained clinical psychologists

ADHD/ADD – psychologists, psychiatrists, other relevantly trained medical doctors, licensed clinical social workers, licensed counselors, psychiatric nurse practitioners

Learning Disabilities – clinical or educational psychologists, licensed school psychologists, learning disability specialists

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Psychological Disabilities – licensed clinical psychologists, licensed clinical social workers, psychiatrists, other relevantly trained medical doctors

Visual Disabilities – ophthalmologists, optometrists

Hearing Disabilities - physicians, otolaryngologists, otologists, audiologists

Medical/Chronic/and Other Disabilities – physicians or other specialists with recorded expertise in the area which accommodations are being requested

3. Be dated, signed, and typed on official letterhead. Hand written notes, treatment plans, or one-paragraph explanations are not acceptable.
4. Include a description of the diagnostic criteria including evaluation methods, tests administered, procedures, and all relevant dates. This should also include a clinical narrative, observations, and results, as appropriate. Individualized Education Plans (IEP) and 504 Plans are only acceptable as supplemental material and do not satisfy documentation requirements.
5. Be current and age appropriate. Disability services are rendered based on current impact of conditions on functions. Therefore, documentation must be current. For learning disabilities, documentation cannot be more than five years old. For ADHD/ADD documentation should not be more than three years old. For psychiatric and cognitive disabilities, documentation should be no more than one year old. For all other disabilities, documentation is expected to be no more than three years old. In addition to being current, all documentation must be age appropriate and normed for adult populations.
6. Elaborate on the student's current functional limitations and expected functional limitations in the future. Written by the licensed professional, this is a narrative explaining how a major life activity is impacted and provides a clear sense about how this impact relates to a postsecondary academic setting. Included in the narrative should be the cyclical or episodic nature of the disability and recommended interventions.
7. Detailed history of medications, accommodations, interventions, and support services should be outlined, with an emphasis on the effectiveness of each facet in fostering academic success for the student.
8. Include specific recommendations for accommodations in an integrated summary, adaptive devices, assistive services, compensatory strategies, and/or collateral support services. While some recommendations may go beyond the College's scope of reasonable and equitable services and benefits, such recommendations can be useful in suggesting alternative accommodations.