

Student Disability Services Brochure Text

Please visit the Student Health & Disability Services Office for a Brochure.

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Documentation Requirements

It is the student's responsibility to disclose their disability to the designated office for the disability services if they desire accommodations. The student can self identify at any time during their academic career. This disclosure does not have to be during the first semester unless accommodations are being requested for that semester. Disclosure must be done before accommodations can be considered. The institution has no responsibility to make accommodations retroactively.

Information regarding disability is considered highly confidential, is maintained in separate, secure files with limited access, and is shared on a need-to-know basis. The Director of Student Health & Disability Services (SHDS) will not inform faculty of a specific diagnosis or disability of a student, only the accommodations required for that diagnosis or disability. Faculty are not prohibited from asking the student for additional information if they believe they could better assist the student and maximize learning.

It is important that students provide documentation not only of a diagnosis of a physical or mental impairment but also of the functional impact of that impairment. This documentation must come from a qualified professional, such as a physician if a medical disability, or a psychometrist or other professional trained in psycho-educational evaluation, if a learning disability.

In the case of **physical disability**, a doctor's statement or a brief note written on a prescription form is not considered sufficient.

Documentation of how that impairment or condition substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of the student might include but is not limited to walking, breathing, seeing, hearing, evidence that the

requested service or accommodation is appropriate to the needs of the student.

Students who have a **mental impairment** that limits their abilities to function in the classroom may qualify for accommodations. Appropriate documentation of a mental impairment should include a statement of the impairment from a licensed mental health practitioner and, if relevant, a statement of current medication from the prescribing psychiatrist. The report should include summaries of the following: *diagnostic interviews, assessment of the student's mental status (including testing summaries) and DSM IV diagnosis. A doctor's statement of the impairment or condition is not sufficient without the documentation of how that impairment or condition substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of the student. If the student has received accommodations in the public schools, a copy of the most recent IEP or 504 plan outlining accommodations is also requested.*

Students applying for services and accommodations on the basis of a **learning disability** must submit a current, comprehensive report of a psycho-educational assessment performed by a person who has received formal training in assessment techniques necessary to diagnose learning disabilities and has professional experience in that field. The student's most recent IEP and psycho-education assessment, while helpful, may not fulfill these requirements. The report should include summaries of the following: diagnostic interview, assessment of the student's aptitudes, academic achievement and information processing, and a clear statement of the diagnosis of the specific learning disability. Language indicating a "learning difficulty" or "learning deficit" will not be considered appropriate documentation.

Diagnosis of **attention deficit disorder (ADD) and attention deficit disorder with hyperactivity (ADHD)** will be acceptable only when made by an individual who holds a current license in an appropriate field (medicine or psychology) and has formal training and experience in assessment of diagnosis and a description of supporting past and present symptoms, a summary of the assessment procedures and instruments used, a narrative summary that includes scores and supports diagnosis and a statement of the student's medical needs, including the impact of medication on the student's ability to meet the demands of an academic environment.

Accommodations For Disabilities

The use of accommodations in post-secondary institutions is based upon more than just the diagnosis of a disability. It is based upon the severity of impact (Functional Impact) on a major life activity. This is why documentation for a post-secondary institution has to provide more information than just a diagnosis and must address the severity of impact. Another student with the same disability may be impacted differently by his disability; therefore, all accommodations are viewed on a case by case basis.

Students at a post-secondary institution are considered adults. The agreement for services needs to be made with the person requesting the services and not with a third party, such as a parent or guardian. The federal laws and FERPA are very clear that institutions are not to communicate to anyone other than the student about that individual's academic progress and/or disability related needs.

A student must meet the requirements of each course they enroll in. It is important to separate personal skills and behaviors from academic requirements. A student with a disability should be graded utilizing the same criteria for all students.

Accommodations That Are Reasonable

Some reasonable adjustments in teaching methods are:

- ❖ Adapted course materials (large print, books on tape, Braille, etc..)
- ❖ Adaptive instructional equipment and/or devices (computers, readers, voice interactive systems, etc.)
- ❖ Note takers, interpreters, readers
- ❖ Permission to tape record lectures

- ❖ A proctor to read exam questions
- ❖ Additional time on exams
- ❖ Permission to use a calculator or spell checker
- ❖ Adaptive equipment such as a print enlarger or augmentative communication devices
- ❖ Scheduling classes (location, appropriate course load, etc.)
- ❖ Consideration of alternative degree or course requirements that do not lower the standards for that degree (i.e. a replacement for a PE requirement)
- ❖ Appropriate dietary alternatives in a school owned food service
- ❖ Permission for use of service animals
- ❖ Housing Accommodations (If housing is also provided for other non-disabled students)

Accommodations That Are NOT Reasonable

With regard to disabilities, in the context of higher education, there are three kinds of accommodations that are *not* considered reasonable:

It is not a reasonable accommodation if making the accommodation or allowing participation poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others.

It is not a reasonable accommodation if making the accommodation means making a substantial change in an essential element of the curriculum (educational viewpoint) or a substantial alteration in the manner in which you provide your services.

It is not a reasonable accommodation if it poses an undue financial or administrative burden.

Some myths, assumptions, and requests that are NOT considered reasonable:

Whatever accommodations I say I need will be provided.

Any absences will automatically be excused if I am sick or it is disability related.

If I have a problem then later notify the instructor or Disability Services office that I need accommodations, I can redo and retake assignments and test so the results can be adjusted.

Colleges will be violating the law if they don't give me one-on-one tutoring.

As long as I attend class and do the homework I will pass the class.
The accommodations I need will be the same in all classes.

I can take only half of the normal test. The tests will have to be shorter for me and all I need to do is ask the disability office for that modification.

I can find a tutor and the college will pay for the tutoring.

If I need more testing to verify my disability, the college will provide the testing.

Procedure for Obtaining Accommodation

1. Students may call, e-mail or contact the Office of Students for Disabilities (in the Student Health and Disability Services office, Kramer School of Nursing).
 - a. Contact:
Brenda Johnston, RN, BSN, Director of Student Health and Disability Services
Email: bjohnston@okcu.edu
Phone: 405-208-5991
Confidential Fax: 405-208-6016
2. Students must provide documentation per the guidelines listed in this brochure for disability requests.
3. The Director of Disability Services will review the documentation and recommend appropriate accommodations.
4. A triplicate form letter (also known as the Access Plan) will be provided to the student for each class they are enrolled in. It is the student's responsibility to take the letter to the faculty for each enrolled course. In rare or emergency situations only, the Coordinator may, with the student's permission, contact faculty directly to communicate immediate problems.
5. To renew accommodations each semester, the student should return to the Office of Students with Disabilities to review their accommodations and obtain new Access Plans.