



Documentation Guidelines: Students with Psychiatric Disabilities

Students who are seeking accommodations or academic support services on the basis of psychiatric disability are required to submit documentation to verify eligibility under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the ADA of 1990, and the ADA Amendments Act of 2009. The following guidelines are provided to assure that documentation is appropriate to verify eligibility. Psychiatric disability is a generic term used to refer to a variety of conditions involving psychological, emotional, and behavioral disorders and syndromes. Criteria used to diagnose a psychiatric disorder are found in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th edition (DSM-5, American Psychiatric Association, 2016).

Qualifications of the Evaluator

The following licensed professionals are considered qualified to evaluate and diagnose psychiatric disabilities:

- Psychologists
- Psychiatrists
- Neuropsychologists
- Neuropsychiatrists
- Clinical social workers, licensed counselors
- Licensed psychiatric nurse practitioners

Note: Evaluators should have an established therapeutic relationship with the student. If no therapeutic relationship between evaluator and student is indicated, additional documentation may be requested or re-evaluation may be warranted.

The name, title and professional credentials of the evaluator, including information about license or certification as well as the area of specialization, employment and state/province in which the individual practices should be clearly stated in the documentation. Reports should be on letterhead, typed, dated, signed, and otherwise legible.

Current Impact of Disability

Documentation should be recent *within six months* and should validate the need for services based on the student's *current* level of functioning in an educational setting. Framingham State University may be flexible in accepting documentation older than six months if it is applicable to the student's current or anticipated setting.

If documentation is inadequate in scope or content, or does not address the student's current level of functioning and need for accommodations, reevaluation may be warranted.

Documentation Must Include:

- Clinical psychiatric diagnosis and a rationale for the diagnosis with quantitative and qualitative information that supports the diagnosis.
- Information regarding current, specific functional limitations affected by, and the severity of, the diagnosis.
- Brief description of current treatment.
- Recommendations for accommodations, including accommodations in the classroom, living in campus residential housing, and meal plan/dietary modifications as applicable.

IEPs and 504 plans are not sufficient documentation, but are helpful supplemental documentation when submitted with the documentation outlined above. While a qualified evaluator may make recommendations regarding accommodations, FSU is responsible for determining a reasonable accommodation.