

BLUE RIDGE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Disability Support Services

**Documentation Requirements for Students with
Medical and/or Physical Disabilities**

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, individuals with learning disabilities are guaranteed certain protections and rights to equal access to programs and services.

*The following requirements are provided in the interest of assuring students have documentation that is appropriate to verify eligibility and to support requests for accommodations, academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids. **Under the ADA, a diagnosis in and of itself does not automatically qualify an individual for accommodations.** The documentation must support each request for accommodation, academic adjustment and/or auxiliary aide.

I. A Qualified Professional Must Conduct the Evaluation

The professional conducting assessments, rendering physical diagnoses, offering opinions about physical disabilities and making recommendations for accommodations must be qualified to do so. It is essential that professional qualifications include both comprehensive training and relevant expertise in the specialty as well as appropriate licensure/certification. Appropriate evaluators may include physicians, surgeons, optometrists, audiologists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, neuropsychologists and other relevantly trained health care professionals. The name and credentials of the professional must be included in the report.

II. Documentation Must be Current

Although some individuals have long-standing or permanent diagnoses, because of the changing manifestations of many physical disabilities, it is essential that documentation is recent and appropriate.

III. Documentation Must be Comprehensive

A copy of the IEP or 504 plan is NOT sufficient.

A handwritten note on a prescription is NOT sufficient.

The diagnostic report should include the following components:

- A. A specific diagnosis
- B. A description of the current functional limitations in academic and employment settings – with the understanding that a physical disability usually presents itself across a variety of settings other than just the academic and test-taking domains. The description should include medical information describing the degree to which the current functional limitations restrict the condition, manner and/or duration under which the student can perform a major life activity when compared to the average person in the general population.
- C. Relevant information regarding any medications that may impact academic performance.
- D. Relevant information regarding current treatment for this or any other condition and the degree of impact on education.
- E. Evidence that alternative etiologies or explanations have been considered such as substance abuse, medication effects, psychiatric, learning and attentional disorders and possible motivational factors affecting performance/functioning.
- F. A rationale for each accommodation requested should be included in the report. A link must be established between the requested accommodation and the functional limitations of the individual pertinent to the educational situation.

A prior history of an accommodation does not in and of itself warrant the provision of the accommodation.

IV. Multiple Diagnoses

Documentation must adhere to the requirements for each diagnosed disability.

This document was adapted from the Educational Testing Service (ETS) website (www.ets.org). The original document was developed by a group of professionals established by the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD).