



Student Accessibility
Services

DOCUMENTATION OF DISABILITIES

Elmhurst University provides program accessibility and reasonable accommodations for persons defined as disabled in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the ADA of 2008.

It is the responsibility of each student who seeks accommodations, auxiliary aids, or disability services from Elmhurst University to provide documentation that describes the disability and its functional impact upon the student's academic or living environment. The following information is designed to help students submit appropriate information and engage in a productive interactive process with the University.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR DOCUMENTATION

Documentation is provided by a licensed or credentialed professional who has appropriate training and experience. For example, a physician would be in the best position to document a physical problem such as a chronic disease; a licensed clinical psychologist would not be.

Appropriate documentation should include a statement identifying the disability as well as a description of the diagnostic methodology. The methodology consists of the evaluation methods, procedures, tests and dates of administration, observations, and specific results. Formal instruments, medical examinations, structured interview protocols, and unstructured interviews are among the acceptable methods that will help the University determine reasonable accommodations.

Most important is the description of how the disability currently impacts the student in the learning or living environment. For physical disabilities, it is helpful to know the expected changes and/or duration caused by the disability.

Documentation may also include the history of past accommodations, services, or medications. Recommendations for current accommodations will also be considered as the University makes the determination of accommodations on case-by-case basis.

Documentation should be provided on an appropriate professional letterhead or through a professional email account. It should include the evaluator's name, title/license number, address, phone number, and email address. The letter on the following page may be presented to the evaluator(s) the student has chosen to document a disability.

Dear Evaluator:

Thank you for agreeing to assist _____, an Elmhurst University student, in documenting the educational impact of his or her disability.

The University uses the documentation as a tool for identifying strategies, including reasonable and appropriate accommodations, which will facilitate access to courses, programs, and services. Documentation is also used to establish the presence of a disability.

Please note that, although the University does not require the use of any specific tests for documentation purposes, following these guidelines will prove most useful:

1. Use direct language when indicating the diagnosis.
 - Avoid terms such as “appears,” “suggests,” or “is indicative of.”
 - Avoid terms such as “learning styles,” “learning differences,” “academic problems,” and “test difficulty/anxiety” which are not recognized as disabilities.
2. Before making a diagnosis, rule out emotional, attention, or motivational problems that might interfere with academic performance but do not constitute a disability.
3. Recognize that accommodations are determined in conjunction with the specific learning situation.
 - Providing information on previous accommodations is helpful in understanding the student’s history and will be used in discussions to determine strategies for facilitating access.
 - Accommodations that were appropriate in previous settings may not be reasonable at the University or in specific courses or programs.
4. Provide as much detail from psycho-educational tests as possible.
 - Attach specific test and subtest scores in standard scores.
 - Specific scores are often important in understanding the relationship between the disability and the requested accommodation.

The information you provide will be maintained in the individual student’s confidential file in Student Accessibility Services, consistent with the requirements of Federal laws. If you have questions or need additional guidance, please contact Student Accessibility Services at 630-617-6448.

The completed form should be mailed and emailed to:

Student Accessibility Services
Elmhurst University
190 Prospect
Elmhurst, IL 60126
accessibility.services@elmhurst.edu

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS FOR DOCUMENTATION

The following additional suggestions may be helpful to students and potential evaluators in preparing requests for accommodations or auxiliary aids. These suggestions are organized by type of disability, and evaluators should use their professional judgment in determining what to provide in an individual situation. Students and evaluators are encouraged, however, to provide the University with sufficient information to allow for a productive interactive process between the University and the student. They are assured that all such information is maintained confidentially, consistent with the requirements of the disability and medical confidentiality laws.

ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD)

- Specific classification for type of ADHD
- Date of first diagnosis/Date of current evaluation
- Summary of the diagnostic interview and evidence of alternative explanations ruled out
- Methods used to determine current impact on student's ability to function in an academic environment
- Current medications including any functional limitation due to those medications
- Discussion of co-morbid conditions, if appropriate

DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING

- Statement of diagnosis
- Date of onset
- Date and results of last audiological exam
- Description of any current technology used by the student (e.g. Cochlear implants, hearing aids)
- Summary of functional limitations of hearing loss and degree of limitation
- Specific suggestions regarding academic adjustments or auxiliary aids

LEARNING DISABILITIES

- Statement of diagnosis as distinct from symptoms/behaviors
- Date(s) of current and prior evaluations
- Specific evaluations including, but not limited to, intellectual functioning, achievement, information processing, language proficiency reported in standard scores
- Justification for how functional limitations relate to specific recommendations

MEDICAL AND/OR CHRONIC HEALTH CONDITIONS

- Statement of diagnosis
- Date and/or age of onset of the condition
- Discussion of the nature, frequency, and severity of symptoms
- Progressive nature of condition, if applicable
- Explanation of how student's difficulties may impact functioning in an academic environment
- Description of any medications or treatments which may impact student functioning

PHYSICAL MOBILITY/DEXTERITY IMPAIRMENTS

- Statement of diagnosis
- Date and/or onset of impairment
- Discussion of the nature, frequency, and severity of condition
- Explanation of how student's difficulties may impact functioning in an academic environment

PSYCHIATRIC DISORDERS

- Statement of diagnosis of impairments as per DSM-V
- Date and/or age of onset/Date of last psychiatric evaluation
- Discussion of any pertinent background information
- Description of current medications which may impact student functioning
- Clinical summary which (1) explains limitation posed by the disability in an academic or living environment, (2) suggests how these limitations may be accommodated, and/or (3) shows how the effect of the disorder is mediated with recommendations

VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

- Statement of diagnosis
- Date and/or age of onset
- Date and report of most recent ophthalmologist examination
- Low vision evaluation of residual visual function, if appropriate
- Discussion of student visual acuity
- Recommendations and rationales for academic adjustments to mediate student functional limitation in academic environments