

## **GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR DISABILITY DOCUMENTATION**

Students diagnosed with physical and/or mental impairments qualify as persons with disabilities when their conditions substantially limit them in one or more major life activities. Columbia University provides reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities with consultation from their academic programs. Reasonable accommodations are adjustments to policies, practices, or procedures that facilitate equal access and opportunity for students with disabilities to the University's programs, activities and services. In order to ensure that students' needs are directly linked to these accommodations, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) allow higher education institutions to require disability documentation to verify disability status and the need for reasonable accommodations. Disability Services (DS) has established the following disability documentation guidelines:

Documentation must:

1. Be recent enough in order to assess the current impact on learning or a major life activity. Please see disability-specific guidelines for more information. Please note that students requesting accommodations due to a chronic medical condition must submit documentation dated within 6 months as well as annually updated documentation.
2. Be sufficiently comprehensive to establish clear evidence of a substantial impact on one or more major life activities.
3. Be sufficient to establish a direct link between the underlying impairment and the requested accommodations.
4. Include a description of what mitigating measures the student has used and whether with such use the student may still require accommodation in order to access University programs, activities and services.
5. Be issued by a medical or other qualified, licensed professional, unrelated by birth or marriage to the student, printed on letterhead, dated, signed, and including the professional's licensing information. No information may be redacted. The University reserves the right to require that a certified copy of the report be transmitted directly from the evaluator to the University.

Documentation also must include:

1. The student's history of receiving reasonable accommodations and academic adjustments, if such history exists.
2. Specific recommendations for accommodations as well as an explanation as to why each is recommended as necessary.

Please also note:

- Referrals for all types of disability evaluations are available from DS. The student must bear any cost incurred in obtaining additional information. Please refer to specific documentation guidelines for each type of disability. If the original documentation is incomplete or inadequate to determine the extent of the disability or reasonable accommodation(s), DS has the discretion to require additional documentation.
- Students must complete the application process and submit disability documentation before they may receive accommodations and services. DS reserves the right to deny services or reasonable accommodations while the receipt of appropriate documentation is pending.
- Documentation written in a language other than English must be translated and notarized. All such documentation as well as documentation from outside the United States written in English must follow DS guidelines.

***\*Please refer to specific documentation guidelines by disability category for type of information needed to document Psychiatric Disabilities, Sensory Disabilities, Learning Disabilities, and AD/HD. These are available at the Disability Services office (700 Lerner Hall) or online at [www.health.columbia.edu](http://www.health.columbia.edu).***