

Connecticut College
Office of Student Accessibility Services
Documentation Guidelines

Psychiatric / Mental Health Disorder-Academic Accommodations

1) Professional Credentials

The following professionals generally are considered qualified to provide a diagnosis and evaluation if they have comprehensive training in differential diagnosis and direct experience in the assessment of the impact of a mental health condition in the classroom setting in an adolescent or adult population: licensed clinical psychologists, neuropsychologists, school psychologists, psychiatrists, or other comparably trained expert. The professional conducting the assessment must be an impartial individual who is not a family member.

The documentation must include the following: the name, title and professional credentials of the evaluator; license or certification number; the area of specialization; employment and state in which the individual practices. All reports should be on letterhead, typed, dated, and signed.

2) DSM-5 Diagnosis and Code Clearly Stated

3) Information Current

Evaluation must be within the past year. Neuropsychological evaluations completed within the past three (3) years are acceptable.

4) History Presented

In support of the psychiatric diagnosis and functional limitation, include the following:

- Historical information about the onset of the impairment
- Historical information about the impact on the individual in an educational setting
- The student's response to medication and other interventions

5) Diagnosis Supported

Documentation should describe the **comprehensive** testing and techniques used to arrive at the psychiatric diagnosis. **A checklist diagnostic-tool is not sufficient** and cannot substitute for comprehensive testing.

Documentation should describe the student's symptoms in detail. Include the following:

- Psychiatric evaluation, including a summary of the assessment procedures and evaluation instruments used to make the diagnosis.
- Full description of the current symptoms, including their frequency, duration, and intensity. Include evidence that the diagnosed condition rises to the level of a disability ("substantial limitation to a major life activity").

- Narrative summary of the evaluation results.
- Psychoeducational or neuropsychological evaluation is sometimes warranted. Include test scores and narrative summary.

6) Functional Limitation Described

Explain how the psychiatric disorder impacts the student's daily functioning and ability to participate in the academic setting. In most cases, anxiety about test taking by itself is not a psychiatric disorder and does not qualify a student for accommodations.

Functional limitation can be documented in a variety of ways:

- Psychoeducational / neuropsychological evaluations, including both test scores and narrative
- Thorough description of the functioning of the individual in as much detail as possible to document how the mental health condition impairs their ability to perform in an academic setting **using detailed descriptions, quotations, and examples**

7) Recommended Accommodations Justified

Describe the specific accommodations requested, and explain why they are needed. The rationale for specific accommodations should focus on the nexus between the impact of the student's diagnosed psychiatric disorder and the requested accommodations.