



## Guidelines for Documentation of Disability in Support of Residential Living Accommodation Request

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act, a "qualified individual with a disability is one who, with or without reasonable modification to rules, policies, or practices, the removal of architectural, communication, or transportation barriers, or the provisions of auxiliary aids and services, meets the essential eligibility requirements for the receipt of services or participation in programs or activities provided by a public entity." A person with a disability is anyone with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of such major life activities as walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, caring for self, performing manual tasks, working or learning. Attention deficit disorders are considered disabilities under ADA if a major life activity is substantially limited.

While it is rare that medically documented conditions manifest which creates such a substantially limiting condition that effects the individual so as to qualify as a disability which can not be accommodated and requires an exemption, this process is designed to assist the student in advancing such a request, as well as initiating the pursuit of available options designed to meet the student's needs (e.g. residential room furnishing or room assignment modification).

To establish a disability, a diagnosis, by a licensed physician trained in the assessment of mental or physical disabilities, as appropriate, is required and should include title and license number and date of the evaluation in the report on letterhead stationary.

Documentation serves as a foundation that legitimizes a student's request for appropriate accommodations. The following guidelines are provided to assist the service provider in collaboration with each student to establish whether a disability exists for which an appropriate accommodation should be developed with the institution.

1. Documentation must give clear and specific evidence of disability. A brief statement on a prescription form or letterhead is not acceptable.
2. Evaluations must be comprehensive and include:
  - a) whether the ailment is observable or not observable,
  - b) the functional limitations of the ailment (i.e. what difficulty might the student experience due to this condition?) , and
  - c) whether the ailment is: i) permanent/chronic, ii) short-term/temporary - 45 days or greater, or iii) temporary -less than 45 days.
3. The process of diagnosis should be reported, providing test scores and/or appropriate data.
4. Documentation must be current. In most cases, the evaluation should have been completed within the past year.
5. Current treatment(s)/therapy and prescribed medications and dosages (including recommendations as to the foregoing as well as the expected effect of such medication).
6. Professionals conducting assessments and rendering diagnoses must be qualified to do so. The person who signs the report must be the one who conducts the evaluation and writes the report. (Documentation by family members, immediate or otherwise is not acceptable.)

Further assessment by an appropriate professional may be required. Recommendations for accommodations may be considered but should establish whether alternative reasonable accommodations are viable. Documentation must be submitted to the Office of Student Success in person, by fax (423/636-0501), or by mail:

Student Affairs Division – Tusculum University  
P.O. Box 5094  
Greeneville, Tennessee 37743

STUDENT SUCCESS DIVISION – DEAN OF STUDENTS  
P.O. Box 5094                      Greenville, TN 37743                      423/636-7315