

I GUIDELINES FOR DOCUMENTING YOUR DISABILITY

Berkshire Community College values inclusion and equal access to its programs and activities and is committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation. Our goal is to create learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive and welcoming. If you are a student with a disability and require reasonable academic accommodations, we encourage you to contact us prior to the start of a semester to discuss your accommodation needs and options. We will work collaboratively with you to develop an effective accommodation plan.

To develop this plan, we will need documentation of your disability. Ideally, your documentation will provide a clear statement of your disability, discuss its current impact on your academic performance and other major life activities, and will be completed by a qualified professional. Additionally, it would be helpful for the documentation to:

- Rate the current status of your condition, level of severity and whether it is permanent or temporary. If temporary, it should include an estimated time for recovery;
- Summarize the relevant education, developmental, psychiatric, medical history that supports your diagnosis; and
- Recommend accommodations and provide a direct link between the requested accommodation and the symptoms of your disability.

If you have a learning disability, traumatic brain injury or intellectual disability, or autism spectrum disorder, it is helpful to provide:

- A complete intellectual assessment with all subtests and standard scores reported;
- A comprehensive academic achievement battery with all subtests and standard scores;
- Current levels of academic functioning in relevant areas such as reading (decoding and comprehension), mathematics (calculations and reasoning), and oral and written language (mechanics and development); specific areas of information processing;
- A written summary of or background information about your education, medical and family histories that relate to your disability; and
- Clear and specific evidence and identification of your disability. When diagnosing a learning or intellectual disability, please use direct language, avoiding terms such as, “suggests” or “is indicative of” or “is consistent with.”

Sufficiency of documentation will depend on the original context, credentials of the evaluator, the level of detail provided and the comprehensiveness of the narrative. The documentation should support the need for requested accommodations.

I WHO IS CONSIDERED DISABLED?

A student is considered disabled when they have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity as defined in the ADAA (2008).

I WHAT IS CONSIDERED CURRENT DOCUMENTATION?

When used for determining accommodations, currency of documentation depends on whether the disability is of a changing or unchanging nature. The following guidelines describe ideal timeframes. However, a student’s narrative of his or her current experience of disability, barriers, and effective and ineffective accommodations may supplement older documentation.

DISABILITY	CURRENCY OF DOCUMENTATION
Learning Disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorders, Traumatic Brain Injuries, Autism Spectrum Disorder	Five years
Psychiatric Disabilities, Health-Related Disorders	One year
Blind, Legally Blind	Does not need to be current
Low Vision	Does not need to be current unless there is a significant change in vision status
Deaf, Hard of Hearing	Does not need to be current unless there is a significant change in hearing status or amplification use

WHO IS A QUALIFIED EVALUATOR?

Professionals conducting assessment, rendering diagnoses of disabilities, offering clinical judgments and making recommendations for accommodations must have training, expertise and appropriate licensure/certification to do so.

DISABILITY	QUALIFIED PROFESSIONAL
Learning Disabilities	Clinical, school or educational psychologists, learning disability specialists
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorders	Licensed psychologists, neuropsychologists, psychiatrists, other relevantly trained medical doctors
Traumatic Brain Injuries	Clinical psychologists, neuropsychologists, neurologists, occupational therapists, speech and language pathologists, and other medical doctors with relevant training
Autism Spectrum Disorders	Psychologists, neuropsychologists, speech/language therapists, occupational therapists, psychiatrists, other relevantly trained professionals
Psychiatric Disabilities	Licensed psychologist, neuropsychologists, psychiatrists, other relevantly trained medical doctors, clinical social workers, school psychologists, psychiatric nurse practitioners
Physical and/or Health-Related Disorders	Medical doctors, surgeons, chiropractors, physical and speech therapists, neuropsychologist, other relevantly trained health care professionals
Blindness, Low Vision	Ophthalmologist, optometrist or other relevantly trained eye care specialist
Deaf, Hard of Hearing	Audiologist, Otolaryngologist or other relevantly trained hearing specialists

Berkshire Community College values inclusion and equal access to its programs and activities and is committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation. Our goal is to create learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive and welcoming. Sometimes, this means providing academic accommodations to students with disabilities. Determining the most effective accommodations for a student consists of an interactive dialogue between the student and the specialists in the Disability Resource Center and a review of the student's disability documentation.

As an evaluator, providing the student with the most current, comprehensive disability documentation is critical. We want to ensure the accommodation process goes smoothly and that the documentation supports the need for an academic adjustment. Please complete all sections of this form thoroughly.

Date of Evaluation _____

Student's Name _____ Date of Birth _____

1. What is the condition that substantially limits learning or other or major life activity? When applicable, please include a DSM or ICD diagnosis with codes.

2. Please give a comprehensive description of how the condition currently impacts learning or other major life activity?

3. Rate the current status of the condition: active progressing controlled in remission

4. Rate the level of severity: mild moderate severe

5. Is the diagnosed disability: temporary (less than 6 months) permanent (greater than 6 months)

6. Describe the specific accommodations you are recommending and explain why they are necessary. For example, in the case above, the student's stress level may impair working memory. Providing a basic four-function calculator for a mathematics exam would be a reasonable accommodation, as would recording class lecture.

7. Complete the following information about yourself. **Please print legibly.**

Name and Professional Title _____

Licensure/Certification Number _____

Phone Number _____

By providing my signature, I am certifying that I am licensed to make this diagnosis and confirming that this student has a disability that substantially limits one or more major life activity:

Signature _____ Date _____

Please upload this form at www.berkshirecc.edu/drc.

Click on Step 2 under the "Apply Now" section.

You may also email it to DRC@berkshirecc.edu.

For questions please contact:

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