Documentation Guidelines for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD, ADD)

To receive academic accommodations for ADHD/ADD in a university setting students should submit clinical documentation that can confirm the diagnosis is accurate. It should also outwardly explain why the accommodations are needed. The objective is to provide enough information that a lay person can understand the need to allow specific types of accommodations. The paperwork should adequately meet the following guidelines:

1. It should be written by a licensed doctor (psychologist, neurologist, pediatrician, psychiatrist, or family physician).

2. It identifies the doctor’s agency, mailing address, and phone number.

3. There should be sufficient information about the student “as an adult.” For instance, there may not be enough information if the document primarily describes the student as a child or adolescent.

4. It describes a conventional method of evaluation.

5. There’s a concise summary of the student as a youngster that supports the diagnosis.

6. There’s a description of the existing ADHD symptoms, their magnitude and frequency, to the extent that a diagnosis of ADHD seems justified.

7. There’s an explanation regarding how the symptoms substantially limit the student’s functioning in relation to important aspects of college (listening to lectures, writing notes, taking tests, completing assignments, etc.).

8. A multi-axial diagnosis is presented using a format such as described in the DSM-IV-TR.

9. There are recommendations about the kinds of appropriate and reasonable accommodations that will be needed for equal access and opportunity.

**Concise statements may be sufficient if they adequately provide enough information to meet these guidelines.** Documentation that’s copied directly from a medical file may not meet guidelines 7 and 9. The best form of documentation could be both the summary of a relatively recent evaluation and a concise doctor’s letter that outwardly explains why the student’s ADHD requires specific accommodations.

Please keep in mind that having a diagnosis of ADHD does not necessarily mean accommodations are required. Some students with ADHD do very well without accommodations. This is the reason it’s important to submit information on guideline 7.