Documentation Guidelines for a Traumatic Brain Injury

To receive accommodations for a brain issue in a university setting students should submit documentation that sufficiently explains the nature of their issue and why specific kinds of accommodation are important.

1. It’s written by a licensed expert, identifies the author’s credentials, and briefly explains how much experience the expert has evaluating such an injury. It indicates where the expert works, including postal address and phone number. It’s written with an obvious focus on the student’s specific circumstances. (Not written in a generic way like; “People with this issue often experience the following circumstances.”)

2. It indicates how the brain issue arose, the method used to assess the issue, and notes any important changes that have already occurred.

3. It lists the brain injury’s symptoms, indicating their magnitude, frequency, and duration.

4. It explains how much difficulty the injury causes in relation to things that must work well for a college education. These could be things like: paying attention; accurately perceiving things; effective reasoning; memory; use of language; motor skills; managing difficult emotions; independently solving problems or making plans; and, any impact on academic skills like reading, writing, knowing basic math facts, etc.. When appropriate it should include statistically relevant measurements of those difficulties with outward explanations for what the resulting numbers mean. When pertinent there’s also an explanation of any other health related issues that impact the brain injury. All the above information is stated in a way that someone who’s not an expert can understand it.

5. It provides an outward diagnosis that fits the circumstances using terminology that’s conventional to the author’s field of expertise. This aspect of the document should be written in such a way that it’s clear the expert HAS assigned the diagnosis to the student. (Not written like; “These difficulties tend to indicate there’s a concussion.”)

6. It outwardly explains how the brain injury will impact specific things college students need to do for favorable achievement. These are things like: attending class; writing lecture notes; completing reading and/or writing assignments; taking tests; making speeches and/or presentations. It could also be things like living in a residential hall on campus, or having a given number of credits per semester. It suggests how long the impacts may be expected to last.

7. There should be a recommendation regarding the kinds of academic accommodations the student will need for equal access and opportunity in a college setting.