



Student Accommodations and Support Services Documentation Guiding Principles

Documentation Process and Recommendations: The Office of Student Accommodations and Support Services (SASS) provide academic services and accommodations for students with diagnosed disabilities. The documentation provided regarding the disability diagnosis must demonstrate a disability covered under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. **The ADA defines a disability as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.**

Student Accommodations and Support Services will review and consider all documentation submitted. Documentation will assist SASS in understanding how the disability impacts the student in an academic setting and the current impact of the disability as it relates to the accommodations requested. Reviewing documentation is an individualized process and each piece of documentation is handled on a case-to-case basis. The eligibility determination process is not a same day process. Once documentation is received, it will be reviewed in order of receipt; therefore, it is recommended that documentation be submitted well in advance of any accommodation related needs. The student will be contacted by an e-mail to their Elms College e-mail address once the documentation has been reviewed. Upon receipt of this email the student is required to meet with the SASS Director for a welcome/intake appointment to be considered fully registered with the office. The documentation must be from an individual who is qualified by education and experience to diagnose the specific disability. It is not appropriate for professionals to evaluate members of their own families for the purpose of documentation of a disability.

Completion of the SASS Intake Process and providing supporting documentation form does not indicate request approval.

There are multiple ways to provide SASS with documentation of your disability diagnosis. This documentation should be completed or provided from a treating or diagnosing healthcare professional (psychologist, psychiatrist, counselor, therapist, social worker, medical doctor, optometrists, speech-language pathologists, etc.). The various methods are explained below:

1. A full detailed evaluation or diagnostic report would provide the richest information to determine the best possible accommodations and supports.
2. A report that provides proof of prior accommodations.
 - A. Individualized Education Plan/ 504 Plan/ Evaluation Team Report.
 - B. Documentation that illustrates past use of postsecondary accommodations.
3. SASS has provided a "Psychiatric Diagnosis Form" that can be completed by the healthcare professional.
4. A healthcare professional can submit a letter of their own; but it is important to note that the SASS office may require a mental health provider to complete the SASS Psychiatric Diagnosis Form in addition to the letter. A letter from a healthcare must include the following information:
 - A. The letter must be addressed to SASS, written on agency or provider letterhead, include the date the letter was written, the providers written name, the providers signature
 - B. A diagnostic statement identifying the disability (with the date of diagnosis).



- C. Severity of the disorder (mild/moderate/severe).
- D. Medication or treatment currently prescribed.
- E. An assessment of major life activities that are affected by the impairment (concentration, memory, social interactions, class attendance, learning, reading, thinking, etc.)
- F. Recommended accommodations that may assist the student in minimizing the impact of the condition in an academic setting (examples: test taking, class attendance, taking notes, understanding materials, speaking, comprehension, transportation, housing, etc.)
- G. Include test scores when applicable.

Learning Disability Documentation Guidelines:

Students with learning disabilities must provide SASS with documentation that meets general documentation guidelines established by this office.

Described below is a preferred documentation profile for individuals with learning disabilities who are requesting accommodations or academic support services. This type of documentation is most useful in providing information to support educational planning and anticipate future accommodation needs.

All documentation will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

- A comprehensive psycho-educational test battery, which means intelligence/ability testing and educational/achievement testing are recommended. A full diagnostic report, including all standard test scores as well as subtest scores and the evaluator's narrative, is recommended. If you are providing information from a public school, include the most recent Comprehensive Evaluation (i.e. Multi-factored Evaluation) and Individual Educational Program (IEP) and the original eligibility evaluation as well as any other MFE's that include the results of a psycho-educational test battery. These documents alone may or may not provide adequate information to document the learning disability.
- A diagnosis made by (a) qualified professional(s) i.e., licensed school psychologist, licensed psychologist, learning disabilities/educational specialist is suggested. The learning disability diagnosis must be clearly stated. References to academic weaknesses and learning differences alone may not substantiate a learning disability diagnosis.
- Assessments normed for adults are preferred. What this means is that your assessments should not be assessments for children, but rather tests that are designed for adults, i.e. WAIS-III rather than WISC-III
- A diagnosis of a learning disability and type(s) of learning disability (ies), which should be supported by test data and a description of current functional limitations are important. Psycho-educational testing completed within the last three years provides a better assessment of current functional limitations.
- Suggestions for appropriate accommodations are helpful. It is important that these suggestions are based upon functional limitations. If it is not evident why an accommodation is suggested by assessing test scores and resulting functional limitations, then a rationale for the accommodations is necessary.
- Along with the above information, transfer students are encouraged to provide written verification from the previously attended school, which includes the dates served and the accommodations used.



Meal Plan Accommodations Documentation Guidelines:

A healthcare professional may submit a letter that meets the standards as noted below:

1. The letter must be addressed to SASS, written on agency or provider letterhead, include the date the letter was written, the providers written name, the providers signature
2. A diagnostic statement identifying the disability (with the date of diagnosis) and the specific condition/diagnosis for which the meal plan accommodations are being requested.
3. Severity of the disorder (mild/moderate/severe).
4. Medication or treatment currently prescribed.
5. An assessment of major life activities that are affected by the impairment (concentration, memory, social interactions, class attendance, learning, reading, thinking, etc.)
6. Information related to how often the student is seen in relation to the above named diagnosis during the past year.
7. Specific diet that the student is able to tolerate.

Housing Accommodations Documentation Guidelines:

A healthcare professional may submit a letter that meets the standards as noted below:

1. The letter must be addressed to SASS, written on agency or provider letterhead, include the date the letter was written, the providers written name, the providers signature
2. A diagnostic statement identifying the disability (with the date of diagnosis) and the specific condition/diagnosis for which the housing accommodations are being requested.
3. Severity of the disorder (mild/moderate/severe).
4. Medication or treatment currently prescribed.
5. An assessment of major life activities that are affected by the impairment (concentration, memory, social interactions, class attendance, learning, reading, thinking, etc.)
6. Information related to how often the student is seen in relation to the above named diagnosis during the past year.
7. Suggested accommodations that may assist the student in minimizing the impact of the condition in the housing setting.

Emotional Support Animal Documentation Guidelines:

A healthcare professional may submit a letter that meets the standards as noted below:

1. The letter must be addressed to SASS, written on agency or provider letterhead, include the date the letter was written, the providers written name, the providers signature
2. A diagnostic statement identifying the disability (with the date of diagnosis) and the specific condition/diagnosis for which the housing accommodations are being requested.
3. Severity of the disorder (mild/moderate/severe).
4. Medication or treatment currently prescribed.
5. An assessment of major life activities that are affected by the impairment (concentration, memory, social interactions, class attendance, learning, reading, thinking, etc.)
6. Information related to how often the student is seen in relation to the above named diagnosis during the past year.
7. Suggested accommodations that may assist the student in minimizing the impact of the condition in the housing setting.

Medical providers should submit disability documentation by fax to 413-5943-3951 or by email to sass@elms.edu or by US postal Mail to:

Office of Student Accommodations and Support Services, Alumnae Library, Elms College, 291 Springfield Street, Chicopee, MA 01013