

Documentation Requirements for Acquired Brain Impairment

Armstrong Atlantic State University's Office of Disability Services is committed to working with students with disabilities to assess their needs and to assist with academic accommodations that may be necessary and appropriate due to their disability.

Services are available to students who:

1. Self-identify to the Office of Disability Services
2. Participate in an intake interview with the Director of Disability Services to determine needs and accommodations
3. Provide appropriate documentation of the disability (see below) that supports the accommodations being requested.

Accommodations are determined on an individual basis, based on the documentation provided and the interview with the student. Accommodations that are considered reasonable and do not fundamentally alter the nature of the program or course may be appropriate.

The AASU Coordinator of Disability Services works closely with the Regents' Center for Learning Disorders at Georgia Southern University in Statesboro to review documentation and assess eligibility for accommodations. All documentation must be reviewed and approved by the Regents' Center for Learning Disorders before accommodations are provided. The RCLD Director can be contacted at (912) 478 0100 if professionals have questions regarding documentation requirements and appropriate tools for evaluation prior to beginning an assessment of a student.

If your evaluation is not within the last 3 years, you will need to update your evaluation with current information. You can have your physician or psychologist perform your evaluation, or have an evaluation done by the Regents' Center for Learning Disorders for \$500. If you are interested in scheduling your assessment at the RCLD, please contact the Office of Disability Services for referral. For more information, contact Kelly Woodruff, Coordinator of Disability Services at (912) 344 2744 or see our web page at www.sa.armstrong.edu/Disability.

Definition of Disability

- An individual must demonstrate that his/her condition meets the definition of a disability under the *Rehabilitation Act, 1973* and/or the *Americans with Disability Act (ADA), 1990*. The ADA defines a disability as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.
- *Substantially limits* under ADA refer to significant restrictions as to the *condition, manner, or duration* under which an individual can perform a particular major life activity as compared to most people.
- *Whether a condition is substantially limiting* to support an accommodation request is a decision made by qualified professional(s) based upon multiple sources of information.
- A clinical diagnosis is not synonymous with a disability. The specific symptoms that are present should be stated in the documentation. Evidence that these symptoms are associated with substantial impairment in a major life activity is required for provision of accommodations. A detailed description of current substantial limitation in the academic environment is essential to identify appropriate academic accommodations, auxiliary aids, and services. Specific requests for accommodations need to be linked to the student's current functional limitations, and the rationale for each recommendation clearly stated.

General Documentation Guidelines

- Secondary education eligibility reports, Individualized Educational Plans, Summary of Progress reports, or previous provision of special education services may not be sufficient documentation for college-level accommodations.
- Documentation should provide a diagnostic statement identifying the disability, describe the diagnostic criteria and methodology used to diagnose the condition, and detail the progression of the condition if its impact on the student's functioning is expected to change over time.
- Documentation should provide an adequate representation of the student's current functional abilities. In most situations, documentation should be within three years of the student's application for services. Professional judgment, however, must be used in accepting older documentation of conditions that are permanent or non-varying, or in requiring more recent documentation for conditions for which the functional impact may change over time.
- Documentation must include the names, signatures, titles, and license numbers of the appropriate evaluators, as well as the dates of testing and contact information. Evaluators must be licensed professionals whose training and licensure status is consistent with expertise in the disability for which they provide documentation.

Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Documentation

Brain injury can result from external trauma, such as a closed head or an object penetration injury, or internal trauma, such as a cerebral vascular accident or tumor. ABI can cause physical, cognitive, emotional, social, and vocational changes that can affect an individual for a short period of time or permanently. Depending on the location and extent of the injury, symptoms can vary widely. Understanding functional changes after an injury and resulting implications for education are more important than only knowing the cause or type of injury.

- Documentation of date of occurrence/diagnosis and the nature of the neurological illness or traumatic event that resulted in brain injury.
- Depending upon the functional domains impacted by the injury, assessments of cognitive and academic deficits and strengths, psychosocial-emotional functioning, and/or motor/sensory abilities relevant to academic functioning may be essential components of documentation of the impact of an acquired brain injury for an individual student.
- Impairments following an acquired brain injury may change rapidly in the weeks and months after the injury, and a more stable picture of residual weaknesses may not be apparent for 1-2 years after an injury. More recent documentation may be necessary to adequately assess the student's current accommodation needs.
- Cognitive and academic processing weaknesses and strengths must be evident on multiple measures and not based on a single discrepant score:
 - Academic Achievement
 - Reading (decoding, fluency, and comprehension)
 - Mathematics (calculations, math fluency, applied reasoning)
 - Written Language (spelling, fluency, written expression)
 - Cognitive Processing Skills
 - Attention
 - Executive Functions
 - Fluency/Automaticity
 - Memory/Learning
 - Oral Language
 - Phonological/Orthographic Processing
 - Visual-Motor
 - Visual-Perceptual/Visual-Spatial

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