

## Guidelines for the Student

Being able to clearly describe your condition, its impact and your needs is important. Practicing this skill will help you work with others to identify appropriate academic adjustments and develop compensatory strategies. The following questions will help you prepare to describe your condition, its impacts and your needs. Review them others who can help you anticipate the academic adjustments (modifications and auxiliary aids and services) you may need in college.

### How do you describe your condition?

How do you describe your condition and how do you want it described to others? You may choose to keep information about your disability confidential. The disability services office will need to have enough information to evaluate the need for modifications and auxiliary aids and services. Instructors need considerably less information and may be told as little as which academic adjustments are appropriate. Even if your disability is not visible or obvious it is likely that at some point a few of your new friends and classmates will notice an academic adjustment; how will you describe your situation to them?

### What is the impact of your condition?

It is helpful to think about how your condition has impacted you in various situations in the past, then to consider how it is likely to impact the typical activities you can expect to encounter at college. You may want to pay particular attention to the following contexts:

1. Classes (lectures, laboratory, physical activity, web based instruction);
2. Assignments (reading, writing, calculating, keyboarding, library work, group work, internet based homework);
3. Communication (speaking, listening, writing, using phones, using e-mail);
4. Evaluation (tests, papers, oral reports group presentations/projects);
5. Time Constraints (timed tests, college deadline, assignment due dates);
6. Attendance (class, required activities out of class, residential requirements);
7. Campus (mobility; orientation/navigation, transportation);
8. Residence Halls (room mates, food issues, climate control);
9. Co-Curricular (clubs, organizations, events, athletics,)

### What have you tried in the past?

What modifications, auxiliary aids, adaptive equipment, and services have been provided in the past? Which ones work well? Which ones did not?

### What do you anticipate needing at college?

## General Guidelines for Documentation Providers

Please note that these guidelines are just that – guidelines – some of which will apply to some but not all disabilities. Not all disability information will require all aspects of the guidelines. More documentation may be required depending on the range and variability of functional limitations within any given disability; less documentation may be required for permanent, stable and/or narrow conditions.

Any documentation provided by a third party must be prepared by a person (not a family member of the student) who may need to be qualified by professional training and practice to diagnose and treat the impairment leading to the disability. Documentation should on letterhead of the practitioner or agency employing the practitioner.

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Handwritten notes, including those on prescription pads and letterhead may be subject to authentication. In all cases, the student's personal accounts concerning his or her functional limitations will be considered as part of the documentation review.

**As appropriate to the disability**, documentation should include:

**Diagnostic Statement** - A diagnostic statement identifying the specific disability including identification of how the condition substantially impairs a life function, the date of the current evaluation, and the date of original diagnosis. Psychiatric diagnoses, including ADHD, must include the DSM diagnosis and a summary of current symptoms. Clear identification of a disability is necessary. Language indicating individual learning styles or difficulties or the possibility of a disability or diagnosis is not sufficient.

**Diagnostic Criteria and Tests** - A description of the diagnostic criteria or diagnostic tests used. All test and subtest scores must be included as standard scores and the norming population identified. Diagnosis of a Learning Disability may include comprehensive psychoeducational assessment of aptitude, academic achievement, and information processing. Where appropriate and relevant, psychoeducational or neuropsychological testing measures may also be required to support requests based on limitations of cognitive or perceptual functioning such as ADHD, psychiatric, and some medical disabilities. Evaluations must be of sufficiently recent occurrence to allow determination of the current impact of the disability in the college academic environment.

**Functional Impact** - A description of the functional impact of the disability is needed. The current functional impact on physical, perceptual, and/or cognitive functioning should be described.

**Treatments** - Currently prescribed treatments, medications, assistive devices, and auxiliary aids or services may be described. Description should include all currently in use and their estimated effectiveness in ameliorating the impact of the disability. Significant side effects that may affect physical, perceptual, or cognitive functioning should be identified and described.

**Recommendations** - Recommendations for modifications, auxiliary aids and/or services and accommodations should be supported by a rational relationship between the recommendation and the functional limitations described. Prior use of academic adjustments and level of benefit should be identified. If no academic adjustments have been used in the past, a rationale for current use is helpful. Subjective evidence (student report) of the efficacy of academic adjustments or accommodations will also be considered.

**IEP** - Secondary school Individual Education Plans (IEPs) may serve as documentation at the postsecondary level – some IEPs provide more information than others. Depending on the information contained, an IEP may provide all or just a portion of the necessary documentation and may serve to identify previously utilized modifications and auxiliary aids or services. This may also apply to **504 plans**, although some will lack critical information.

**Confidentiality** - Disability documentation is considered private information and does not become part of a student's permanent educational record. In accordance with federal and state law, the college shall maintain confidentiality of student records. All documentation and records will be maintained in the Office of the Coordinator Access and Equity Services and may include electronic records.

Send documentation to:

Carolyn Boone, Access & Equity Services  
Tompkins Cortland Community College  
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