

Dickinson

Access and Disability Services (ADS)

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GUIDELINES FOR DOCUMENTATION OF HOUSING ACCOMMODATION REQUESTS ON THE BASIS OF A PSYCHIATRIC/PSYCHOLOGICAL DISABILITY

Dickinson College students who seek accommodations based on their disability are responsible for completing an online *Disability Disclosure and Request for Accommodation* form (through www.dickinson.edu/access), and for providing appropriate supporting documentation. Dickinson College approaches requests for accommodations with the belief that each student's circumstance is unique and that a flexible approach is the right way to determine appropriate accommodations.

By itself, a medical diagnosis does not establish a need or an entitlement to accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or the Americans with Disabilities Act as Amended (ADA-AA). Another way of saying this is that having any disorder or condition does not, by itself, lead to any conclusion under Section 504 or the ADA. Therefore, the documentation required by Dickinson College extends beyond the medical diagnosis and encompasses the four key elements of a person's disability status under Section 504 and the ADA. Those key elements are that:

- the student has a physical or mental impairment
- the impairment limits the student's participation in a major life activity*
- the degree of limitation is substantial and
- there is something that the college can do that would be reasonable, needed, and predictably effective in responding to the impairment.

Documentation that substantiates each of these four areas serves as a foundation that legitimizes a student's request for appropriate accommodations. If a student seeks accommodations on the basis of more than one disability, then more than one professional may need to be involved in developing the diagnoses and other documentation.

A student who seeks a housing accommodation is responsible for obtaining any needed evaluations, and for seeing that Access and Disability Services receives the following from his or her care provider:

1. The **Disability Documentation Form for College Housing**
2. **Documentation** which supports the diagnosis and legitimizes a student's request for appropriate accommodations

(See next page for details regarding documentation needed)

* The Disability Documentation Form, list examples of a "major life activity" as defined under the ADA Amendments Act of 2008. According to the ADA, "A major life activity also includes the operating of a major bodily function, including, but not limited to, functions of the immune system, normal cell growth, digestive, bowel, bladder, neurological, brain, respiratory, circulatory, endocrine, and reproductive functions."

1. **THE DISABILITY DOCUMENTATION FORM FOR COLLEGE HOUSING** is to be completed by a licensed professional health care provider with experience and expertise in the area for which an accommodation is being requested. The diagnostician must be an impartial individual who is not a family member of the student. (This form can be found at www.dickinson.edu/ADS-Housing.)

2. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

- The documentation must identify a diagnosis of a psychological disorder by name and by code, according to either the ICD diagnostic system or the APA's most recent Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (please include the DSM code).
- Documentation must be comprehensive and present **the current functional limitations** the disability has on one or more of the student's major life activities, as well as the **frequency, duration, and severity of symptoms** and the degree to which they impact the individual in the residential environment. Due to the changing nature of psychiatric disorders, documentation should include a recent evaluation or updated assessment within the past six (6) months.
- Include any assessment procedures used to make the diagnosis, and, when applicable, any testing results, including standardized and percentile scores.
- Include treatment interventions, past accommodations, and relevant developmental, historical and familial data of a psychiatric/psychological disorder.
- Each requested accommodation must be correlated with a specific functional limitation on the student in the residential environment.
- If the disability is managed by medication, the documentation should list current medication, dosages, and existing side effects, as well as the impact of medication on the student's ability to meet the demands of the postsecondary environment.

If a student seeks accommodations related to more than one disability, more than one professional may need to be involved in providing documentation. Students who are unsure about the type(s) of documentation needed should consult Access and Disability Services.

The Housing Accommodation Committee will review all requests and documentation provided on an individual basis. **Reasonable accommodations will be determined based on what is medically necessitated, rather than what is desired.**

Care providers should send disability documentation directly to ADS in one of the following ways:

Email: access@dickinson.edu
 Fax: 717-254-8139
 Mail: Access and Disability Services, Dickinson College
 P.O. Box 1773, Carlisle, PA 17013-2896

Questions? Call (717) 245-1734 Our office hours are Monday-Friday 8:00am – 4:00pm