

Guidelines for Documenting Attention Disabilities

Students who are seeking support services from Washington State University Tri-Cities on the basis of an attention disability will be required to submit documentation to verify eligibility. Documentation of disability and related information will be kept in a separate file in the Disability Services Office. The cost and responsibility for providing this documentation shall be borne by the student.

Although the more generic term Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) is frequently used, the official nomenclature used in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th edition (DSM-IV) or successive editions, Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), will be used in this document. Documentation should show current impact of the disability. The following guidelines are provided in the interest of assuring that the evaluation and report are appropriate for documenting eligibility and identifying appropriate academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids. The report should clearly state the names, titles, professional credentials, addresses, and phone numbers of the evaluators, indicate date(s) of testing, and be on official letterhead, typed, dated, and signed.

The documentation should:

1. **Be prepared by a professional** who has comprehensive training in differential diagnosis and direct experience working with adolescents and adults with ADHD which may include: clinical psychologists, neuropsychologists, psychiatrists, and other relevantly trained medical doctors;
2. **Be current.** The provision of all academic adjustments and auxiliary aids are based upon the assessment of the current impact of the disability on academic performance. This means that the diagnostic evaluation should show the current level of functioning and impact of the disability;
3. **Be comprehensive.** Minimally, areas to be addressed should include:
 - a. **Evidence of early and current impairment.** Diagnostic assessment should consist of more than a self-report. Due to the fact that ADHD is, by definition in the DSM-IV, first exhibited in childhood and manifests itself in more than one setting, a comprehensive assessment typically includes a clinical summary of objective historical information garnered from sources such as transcripts, report cards, teacher comments, tutoring evaluations, psycho-educational testing, medical history, employment history, family history, and third party interviews when available;
 - b. **Alternative diagnoses or explanations should be ruled out.** Possible alternative diagnoses including medical, psychiatric disorders, and educational or cultural factors affecting the individual that may result in behaviors mimicking ADHD should be explored;
4. **Include relevant testing information.** Test scores or subtest scores alone should not be used as a sole measure for the diagnostic decision regarding ADHD. Selected subtest scores from measures of intellectual ability, memory functions

tests, attention or tracking tests, or continuous performance tests do not in and of themselves establish the presence or absence of ADHD. Checklists and/or surveys can serve to supplement the diagnostic profile, but in and of themselves are not adequate for the diagnosis of ADHD;

5. **If applicable, present a specific diagnosis** of ADHD based on the DSM-IV, or successive editions, diagnostic criteria. The diagnostician should use direct language in the diagnosis of ADHD, avoiding the use of such terms as “suggests,” “is indicative of,” or “attention problems”;
6. Provide a comprehensive interpretive summary synthesizing the evaluator’s judgment for the diagnosis. The report should include: all quantitative information in standard scores and/or percentiles, all relevant developmental, familial, medical, psychosocial, behavioral, and academic information; and a clear identification of the substantial limitation(s) of a major life function presented by the ADHD.

Suggestions of academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids with supporting evidence may be included. The final determination for providing appropriate academic adjustments and auxiliary aids rests with WSU Tri-Cities’s Disability Services Office.