



SOUTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

Center for Academic Success

General Documentation Guidelines

Southwestern University students who need access to accommodations in the university setting must apply with the Center for Academic Success (CAS). Part of the application process is the submission of medical documentation that substantiates the presence of a disability under the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) and helps to outline the functional limitations experienced by the student. Documentation submitted to the CAS must adhere to the following guidelines.

Current Documentation:

Southwestern University requires that submitted documentation be within three years old, but will utilize common sense and discretion in accepting older documentation of conditions that are permanent or non-varying. For conditions that are likely to change in presentation, severity, and functional limitations over time (i.e., psychological disabilities, traumatic brain injury, some physical disabilities), documentation no older than one year is typically required. The University, therefore, reserves the right to request additional information in order to determine eligibility. For your convenience, we offer forms that can be used as a conversation point with your medical providers. We suggest that you sign a release of information with your medical providers.

Comprehensive documentation should:

- State the specific disability, as diagnosed, and when appropriate, should relate the disability to the applicable professional standards; for example, DSM, medical codes, and the like.
- Provide relevant educational, developmental, and medical history.
- Describe comprehensive testing and techniques used to arrive at the diagnosis. Include test results with subtest scores (standard or scaled scores) for all tests.
- Offer suggestions for accommodations and the rationale for the requested accommodations.
- Note: We will not accept a printout of medical history from the student's medical portal as sole documentation.

Evaluator Qualifications:

- The professional conducting the assessments and rendering diagnosis must have comprehensive training with regard to the specific disability being addressed.
- All providers must be impartial individuals who are not family members of the student.
- The name, title, and professional credentials of the evaluator, including information about licensing or certification, the area of specialization, employment, and the state in which the individual practices should be clearly stated in the documentation.

Requests for Emotional Support Animals (ESAs):

- Please note that the University does not accept letters from the numerous online psychological companies that (in exchange for a fee) offer verification or certification of the need for a support animal. To warrant approval of a request for an emotional support animal, a student should be prepared to submit appropriate medical documentation that describes an active therapeutic relationship between the student and the clinician recommending the support animal. Please see our guiding document for ESAs.