



Muhlenberg College Office of Disability Services Documentation Guidelines

Psychiatric/ Behavioral/ Mental Health Disorders

✓ Under the Americans With Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADA AA) revised in 2008, the term "disability" includes (a) a mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of an individual; (b) a record of such an impairment; or (c) being regarded as having such an impairment. The ADA further defines mental impairment to include any mental or psychological disorders such as emotional or mental illness. The American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) is frequently used as guidance for identifying psychiatric, behavioral, and mental health disorders. However, not all conditions listed in the DSM are disabilities or even impairments for purposes of the ADA.

Diagnosis by a licensed mental health professional, including licensed clinical social workers, licensed professional counselors, psychologists, or psychiatrists is required. The diagnostician must be an impartial evaluator who is **not** a family member **nor** in a dual relationship with the student.

The medical professional must provide a comprehensive, typed narrative report on letterhead that includes the date of the Evaluation/Report, signature, title and professional credentials. The assessment should be **current (six months to one year of entering college)**, include a clearly stated diagnosis, and must provide information about the significant impact to a major life function, including those expected for a post-secondary experience.

✓ **The Evaluation/Report must include the following information:**

- A clear statement of diagnosis, including evidence that symptoms currently meet DSM-V criteria in nature and severity,
- A professional determination or opinion that the diagnosed condition rises to the level of a disability,
- Information regarding any formal assessments and data that may have been completed as part of the evaluation,
- Age of onset of the disorder and a comprehensive history of presenting problems,
- Summary of present levels of functioning,
- Summary of clinical and observational data, as well as, previous disability documentation findings,
- Medical information including the current treatment plan, effectiveness, and the duration and frequency of the therapeutic relationship
- Medical information regarding medications prescribed (compliance, side effects, and positive or negative responses)
- Recommendations for accommodations must include a clear rationale between key components of the diagnosed condition and the accommodation requested,
- List and discuss past accommodations received and their effectiveness